

## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE FISHERMAN'S HOME.



GERMAN traveller in Denmark has likened the whole of the Cimbrian peninsula, consisting of Jutland and the Duchies of Holstein and Slesvig, to a tri-coloured flag of green, red, and yellow. The Eastern coast, with its gentle undulation of hill and dale and lovely beech woods, supplies the green stripe; the flat, barren, treeless desert of heath running up through the centre forms the red; and the Western coast, with its chain of bare sandhills, ending at the northernmost point in a level plain of sand, represents the yellow of the tri-colour. But even in this last stripe, the sandy region, there is an element of beauty; for the fiords, or arms of the sea, like the Scottish firths, run up far into the land, forming bays, gulfs, and creeks of the loveliest blue water. The numberless streams wherewith Jutland is everywhere intersected falling into these fiords, the water therein is often more fresh than salt; nevertheless, it rises and sinks with the ebb and flow of the tides of the German Ocean.

Beyond the fiords, the violence of the waves is very great; the shells are mostly ground into powder by them, and the sand is as formidable to foreign vessels continually stranded upon it as to the dwellers near the shore, who every now and then have their houses blockaded and half-buried by whirlwinds of flying mud. But lower down in the peninsula, the sandhills themselves being overgrown with a peculiar sort of bent grass—the only vegetable that can draw life from such a soil—oppose a barrier to the violence of the sea. Sometimes when the sun shines behind them these grass-grown sandhills deceive the wanderer with the semblance of wooded heights; while further inland, where they are quite bare, they cheat the eye with visions of white, snow-clad ranges of hills.

The largest and most northern of the Jutland fiords is the Limefiord, of the origin whereof the following legend is told:—

“There was once a strange sort of monster, like a wild boar in form, whose bristles rose above the tree-tops when he passed through the

woods. This monster, known as the Limogrim, raked up the earth till the sea burst into the aperture, and, making itself a deep channel, it became known as the Limegrimsfiord, afterwards contracted into Limefiord." Through the assistance of the Ayger Canal, this fiord now extends from the eastern to the western shore, from the Cattegat to the German Ocean. The region to the north of it is a flat space of sand. Lower down on the western coast is a much smaller opening, the Nissumfiord, and here the sandhills overgrown with bluish grass begin.

It was on a fine summer evening in June that an intelligent-looking lad, about fourteen years old, was returning with his books and slate from the nearest village school-house to one of the long low fishermen's cottages near the shore of the Nissumfiord. The cottage was built of wood, painted in black and yellow stripes, like most others in this neighbourhood. The climate requires that they should be externally painted every year, and whitewashed and coloured frequently within. A Jutlander not only paints his house himself; his own hands build him a new one, probably on the same spot, when the timbers of his old habitation have become rotten through bad weather; he procures fresh planks from the shore, and buys his double window ready framed and glazed at the nearest market town.

Hans Erickson—which was the name of the lad—entered the cottage, set down his books on the carved chest of drawers, painted bright red and blue, and called out, "Kirstin!" The room was very clean, and would have been neat but for the litter of wood splinters and shavings scattered about in one corner, where sat, busily engaged in carving a wooden figure, a white-haired old man, apparently very intent upon his occupation, for he scarcely raised his head from his work as the boy entered. Hans sat down on one of the wooden settles and called a second time, "Kirstin!"

His sister, Kirstin, appeared presently, her arms laden with peat for firing. Having stowed this away, "I am ready, Hans," she said; and tying a handkerchief round her head, she took up from the fire-place a pitcher full of warm ale, then nodded her head to the old man, who answered her with a smile, and the two went out together.

A healthy, active Jutland maiden was Kirstin, her hair brown, with threads of gold in it, her eyes a dark hazel, her features expressing peculiar serenity and sweetness. Some observers might have thought

they wanted animation, and retained too much of the simplicity of childhood for actual beauty, but at all events there was no lack of vigour about the young girl; and though she had done a good day's work, and though the wind was busy that bright evening, fighting with every article of her dress, tossing up columns of sand and pebbles at her feet, and impeding progress in every way, there was no weariness in her face or step.

They walked quickly, though every now and then obliged to turn round and wait till a gust more violent than usual had spent its fury; a few minutes brought them within sight of the sea. There lay the wide German Ocean glowing in the splendour of the summer sunset. A few black planks, the skeleton as it were of a ship wrecked only a fortnight ago, still pushed upwards through the sand of the shore, seeming to make a melancholy protest against the glorious beauty of earth, sea, and sky, the only dark objects in the scene, for the heavens were gold, the waves liquid gold, the sandhills that stretched inland as far as eye could see, like ocean-waves charmed into motionless rest, were gold also. Brother and sister stood on the shore shading their eyes with their hands, watching for the boats. The sun had set, Hans and Kirstin are no longer alone in their watch; other members of fishermen's families, wives and daughters, girls and boys, were now gathered on the shore, each bearing provisions of some sort.

It is not the custom of these hardy toilers of the sea to take any food with them on their expeditions; thus they are glad enough on landing to be welcomed with some warm invigorating draught. Kirstin had a word or a smile ready for every one of the watchers, old and young; but Hans seemed to stand aloof—perhaps he was rather older than the other lads about him. The soft beauty of the scene was gone, the sky had darkened, the wind sobbed and wailed bitterly through the long bluish grass growing on the sandhills, little white specks of foam dotted the sea, while three dreaded ridges fringing the coast were marked out by three unbroken streaks of white. These three sand-reefs form at once the danger and the safeguard of the coast; many a ship has been wrecked, many lives have been lost through them, but like a triple rampart they stand out against mountain-high waves, that without their resistance would sooner or later overflow and devastate the land.

Kirstin's interchange of greetings did not prevent her from being

the first to discern the little black point in the distance. "There they come!" she cried. "You always see them first!" said Hans, discontentedly. "I haven't hurt my eyes with reading small print, like you, Hans," she replied. "There they come!" was repeated joyfully from one to another, as the small black object grew larger before their eyes. It passed the first reef successfully, then shot forward more quickly—the second reef is passed; now for the third—the boat approaches—the watchers all fall upon their knees and clasp their hands in a brief prayer—very brief, and all spring up again. Kirstin and Hans take tight hold of each other's hands—one minute of suspense, a faint scream bursts from some of the women, but all is right; the boat is over the last ridge, scarce a stone's throw from the shore; another vigorous stroke of the oars, and the fishermen spring on the land.

Kirstin and Hans hurried forward to greet their father. Michael Erickson took his daughter's pitcher with both hands and emptied it at one draught; then after pausing a moment to stroke her cheek and let her kiss him, he rejoined his companions, who were now engaged in dividing the fish they had caught into equal shares. His son and daughter each took up Michael's fish, his own hands being engaged with the nets. A good-looking young man came up and said, "Good evening, Kirstin; let me carry the fish home for you."

"I like to carry it myself, thank you, and you have your own to carry," she replied.

"Ah," said her father, "there's no need to take you out of your way, Morten. I suppose you took Karen home in good time, Kirstin?"

"Yes, I took her home," was the reply; "but, Morten, cannot you tell old Elsa she must not frighten the child with dismal tales—she will not mind what I say."

"If she won't mind you, she will mind me still less," said the young fisherman; "but I will tell Karen she must not be a little coward—and good-night, and thank you, Kirstin, for your kindness to my poor little step-sister. Good-night, Michael Erickson; good-night, Hans."

"You were very short with him, father," said Hans, in a grumbling tone that seemed habitual to him. "Why shouldn't Morten come and sup with us? he is always good company."

"I don't always want company," said Michael, sententiously.



They entered the fisherman's cottage; their ordinary dwelling-room was large, for the grandfather lived with them. Michael entered first, Hans and Kirstin stopping to hang up the fish on lines to dry, just in front of the house. When Kirstin went in, eager to lay out the supper, her father greeted her with, "Kirstin, I thought you said you had taken Karen home?" The girl uttered an exclamation of surprise, for in the chimney-corner, his favourite seat, sat her white-haired grandfather, holding nestled in his arms a little girl with closed eyes and flushed cheek, her head with its flaxen curls thrown back against the old man's chest.

"The child was frightened," he said; "so she came back to me, and I talked to her till she fell asleep; but do not wake her."

"She must be waked up when she is taken home," said Kirstin; "but there's no hurry, father must have supper first;" and she busied herself in getting it ready, and her father seated himself with an air of serious enjoyment. Kirstin waited upon him and her grandfather, who would not stir from his corner lest he should wake the child; and the good-humoured girl not only brought him his basin of porridge, but fed him with her own hands.

Hans sat at table with his father, his left hand keeping his place in the book he had taken up on entering the house, while the right one conveyed his spoon to his mouth. "Go and do as your sister is doing, and let her sit down to supper," said his father, presently; and Hans got up accordingly, though rather unwillingly, for disobedience was not to be thought of in Michael Erickson's home.

But Kirstin's meal was ended in very few minutes, and she then took the little girl from the old man's arms. "Now, Karen, dear, wake up, for I must take you home." The child's eyes opened, a pair of dreamy blue eyes were raised inquiringly to Kirstin's face; she was eight years old, but her slight form and delicate features—unusual among peasants—made her appear much younger, and her weight was not too heavy a burden for her healthy young nurse, though Kirstin had not counted more than fifteen summers.

Michael bade Hans get up and go with his sister to Morten Ranildson's; and Hans, who had returned to his studies, sighed as he put down his beloved book and rose up from his seat. Michael grinned, "The schoolmaster 'll make but a poor fellow of thee, my lad, if thou canst do nought but read." Yet in his heart the fisherman was right down

glad and proud of his son's devotion to his books. Every Jutlander can read ; and there is scarce a cottage, however humble, but can boast its book-shelf, where the history of Denmark, Holberg's comedies, and sometimes a translation of Shakespeare or the Arabian Nights, rest side by side with the Bible. And Michael's secret ambition was to send his son, whose quiet habits and comparatively slight make unfitted him for a fisherman's life, to some Government school, where he might learn to get his living by the work of his brain instead of his hands. At present he was only thirteen years old, and under the village schoolmaster, who spared no pains to educate this, his favourite pupil.

"Oh, what a beautiful night!" exclaimed Kirstin as she stepped out of doors with her charge, her brother beside her. "Look at the stars, Karen ; see, there is 'Charles's Wain,' and there 'Our Lady's Wain,' and 'Freya's Wheel,'"—the names given by Scandinavian peasants to other constellations.

"Mr. Gröndal says he will teach me astronemy some day, and then I shall be able to tell you the names of the heavenly bodies in Latin, and reckon their distances from each other," said Hans.

"It must be grand, knowing the stars' names in Latin," replied his sister ; "but as for their distances from each other, I can hardly imagine how any one can find that out. You will want a very big telescope, Hans, for that."

"Ah, when I go to Copenhagen, and see the observatory there ! Kirstin, I think I should like to live in a great city. I should not care to learn a great deal, and then, like our pastor, go nigh to forget it all, living among farmers and fishermen."

"Don't get up quite among the stars, Hans," said his sister, laughing, "or we shall not be able to follow you even in our thoughts. I think, for my part, you might be very proud to be like our pastor. Karen," she said, presently, "don't go to sleep again. I want you to tell me, darling, what made you come back to us after I had taken you home."

"I was frightened," said the little girl, in a low voice.

"Frightened ? but at what ?"

"Old Elsa told me a story about a ghost, and then the wind blew, and the sea was rough, and she said perhaps Morten would not come home to-night ; and then she told me the sea would have a victim every year, or else it would sweep over the land, and that in former times people used every year to put out a little child in a barrel for the sea to

take for its victim; and then I thought she looked as though she would put *me* out in a barrel; and so I ran away when she was not looking; and old Magnus Erickson said I might stay with him, and I went to sleep."

Kirstin was silent a few minutes. "Karen," she then said, "it was silly of you to be frightened, for you know old Elsa would not harm you; she has taken good care of you many a night when Morten has not come home. And if they did such wicked things as she told you of in the old times, be sure they would not do them now; our good king would punish people if they did. And about the sea, Karen; tell me who made the sea."

"Our Lord," said the little girl, reverently.

"Yes; and it cannot come over the land unless our Lord bids it come; and He loves you, Karen, and will not let it harm you. I will teach you a verse in the Psalms, Karen, that I often say to myself when I see the waves rising high, and my father is on them;" and she repeated: "The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods are risen, the floods lift up their waves. The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly; but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier." The child repeated the words after her. "But you are brave, Kirstin. I can't be brave."

"I don't know that I am brave," said Kirstin. "I know I often feel afraid; but then, Karen, I repeat a verse, or I make the sign of the cross, and that gives me courage again."

"Now, Kirstin, you are as bad as the child," said Hans.

"Mr. Gröndal says it is shocking how superstitious people are in these parts. What good can the sign of the cross do you?"

"You know you told me what the schoolmaster said about that before," replied his sister. "And so, when I went to the pastor about my confirmation, I asked him whether it was wrong to sign myself with the cross when I felt afraid. And Hans, he said there was no harm in doing it, provided I remembered it was not my making the sign, but my faith and trust in our Lord that would keep me safe; and so I like to do as I have been used to do, and as grandfather does, and Morten."

"Yes, of course, everybody is superstitious here," pronounced her brother, in a tone of sublime superiority.

"Who is superstitious here?" inquired a clear, manly voice, close to them in the darkness.

"Oh, Morten! here is Karen," cried Kirstin; "have you been uneasy about her?"

"I guessed she was at your house, and was just coming after her," was the reply. "Come in, both of you, and sit down a minute;" and he led them into the dwelling-room, where old Elsa was hovering about the supper-table with a more than usually uneasy expression on her face, that betrayed that she had just been receiving a sharp lecture from her young master. "Well, Hans," said Morten, "you will take a glass of ale after your walk. Now, Karen, what were you frightened about?"

"About the sea, and ghosts; but Kirstin has told me about our Lord being mightier than the sea; but ghosts, Morten—you believe in ghosts, don't you? every one believes in ghosts."

Morten took his little step-sister in his arms, and stroked her flaxen curls with an air of profound meditation; he was fairly driven into a corner; he was only an untaught, though intelligent, mariner, and used to the society of mates more credulous and ignorant than himself. He was sincerely anxious to set his little sister free from supernatural terrors, and yet he must speak the truth; he looked tenderly into her face, raised so wistfully towards his, as he answered, "I tell you what, Karen, I never saw a ghost myself, though I have heard of them. I think it is very seldom they are allowed to come troubling us; and I am quite sure our Lord will not let them harm us, if we say our prayers and do our duty. And of all the stories I ever heard about ghosts, I never heard of one hurting a good little girl like my Karen, whom the angels are sure to be watching. Whenever they have done harm it has been to people who had wronged them, or who were foolish enough to be afraid. Nothing ever hurts anybody who trusts in God, Karen. All the stories about elves and trolls, and ghosts and witches, show they can do no harm to the fearless and true-hearted.

"Come, Karen," said Kirstin, "you are sleepy and tired, let me put you to bed;" and she took the little girl into the sleeping chamber.

"Morten says you will sing to me," said the child, her arms still clinging to Kirstin as she laid her in bed.

"Well, what shall I sing—about Maid Thorailil?" and Kirstin's clear, sweet voice began the quaint old ballad:

"Maid Thorailil wanders at evening hour;  
She spoke the Name that frees from thrall,  
She tends each herb, she waters each flower,  
'God bring us to Paradise all.'

THE WEEPING AND THE SMILING CHILD.

An angel stood by her, his look was so mild,  
 'To Paradise come, then, with me, dear child!'  
 Maid Thorali then on her knees fell down;  
 She prayed for the king who bears sceptre and crown.  
 She prayed for the peasant who ploughs the soil,  
 'God grant he may eat of the fruit of his toil.'  
 She prayed for poor women who children bear,  
 'God grant them release from their pain and their care.'  
 She prayed for young children who learn at the school,  
 'God grant them to profit from lesson and rule.'  
 She prayed for poor servants who work for their bread,  
 'God help them in trouble when sore bestead.'  
 She prayed for the widows and fatherless poor,  
 'God grant to them a kind neighbour's door.'  
 She prayed for the ships 'mid the salt sea-foam,  
 'God grant them fair winds and a safe voyage home.'  
 She prayed for the captives in prison and chain,  
 'God sunder their fetters and comfort their pain.'  
 Now, Christians, ye've heard Maid Thorali's song,  
 She spoke the Name that frees from thrall,  
 God help us our wilderness journey along,  
 And bring us to Paradise all!"

(To be continued.)

THE WEEPING AND THE SMILING CHILD.

*Translated, by permission, from the German of Rosalie Koch.*



ALL waxen tapers glimmer in the vast hall. Their light falls upon rich garlands of roses and lilies, heliotrope and dark poppies, while a sweet solemn anthem echoes round—

"How they so softly rest,  
 All, all, the holy dead!"

Among the glorious flowers, and light, and music, a child—a happy child—lies sleeping. How can she sleep with so much loveliness around her?

She, too, is beautiful. In her hair is a chaplet of white roses, her tiny hands close over a branch of everlasting, and she is smiling in her

## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE GHOST OF THE CHURCHYARD.



**W**HAT, telling ghost stories? quoth Kirstin, as she re-entered the dwelling-room, a little startled on seeing a larger party than she had left. Three sturdy young fishermen had dropped in, one by one, to take a glass of ale and have a chat with Morten Ranildsen; seated round the room on benches, all were enjoying themselves in true Jutland fashion, smoking and telling tales by turns. Old Elsa was now the speaker, and as she bent forward, her finger raised to give emphasis to her narrative, the expression of her sharp features, and quick little grey eyes showing how entirely she believed in the marvels she was relating, Kirstin could not wonder that poor little Karen should have run away from her in a fit of nervous excitement. Morten looked uneasy, and when Kirstin entered, he started up, exclaiming, "What stuff it is! I don't believe half of it!"

Kirstin went straight up to her brother, "Hans, we must make haste home—father will be angry."

Hans had no inclination to move, but as his host did not press them to stay, he had no choice in the matter. When they were again in the open air he muttered, "How stupid it is going home so early! I wonder why father would not invite Morten to supper; it is so dull by ourselves; you like him, don't you, Kirstin?"

"Yes," replied Kirstin, composedly; "Morten is like an elder brother to me; I can always depend upon him to help me, as I should upon you if you were older, instead of younger, than myself." She stopped hastily, for it struck her there was more difference in the measure of her reliance upon Morten and Hans than a few years could account for.

During their stay in the young fisherman's house, the full moon had risen, and the sandhills around looked white and weird-like under her silvery beams. Their way almost skirted the fiord, so that except when a tall hill intervened, they kept the sea in sight; it was now calm, the wind being hushed and the waves peaceful. Kirstin was,

however, surprised when Hans proposed that as the night was so fine they should lengthen their walk by going on the shore.

"We are late enough already," she said; "and you are not like the superstitious cowards, as you would call them, who are afraid to pass through the churchyard at night."

"Afraid! no, indeed," returned the boy, scornfully; but the truth was that Hans was not only less brave, but less proof against the superstitions he had been brought up among than he himself believed. His imagination was lively, and the stories he had heard that night had not only entered his ears, but had left some impression on his mind.

The village churches scattered at intervals along the Nissumfjord, each built of stone, to resist the attacks of wind and waves, are not perfect specimens of architecture; most of them lack towers, the bells being hung between two planks of wood. The graves surrounding them stand in no cultured garden, are shaded by neither tree nor bush, are distinguished by no sculptured monument. The little grass-grown knolls alone mark where the dead are laid, and if here and there a rudely-carved cross of wood is seen, that wood has come from the sea; it is the remnant of some luckless ship washed ashore; the memorial will not long endure, it will soon be worn away by the incessant action of wind and sea-foam.

"Here is our old church," said Kirstin; "how grey it looks in the moonlight, and how peaceful and quiet everything is now the wind is at rest! What made you start so, Hans?"

"Do you see that—that?" said the boy.

"See what?" asked his sister, much startled in her turn.

"That white figure there—bending over the grave; now it is standing upright—it beckons; Kirstin, come away!" he shrieked, in an agony of terror, and seized hold of her arm. His sister, nothing loth, followed him. "But I thought you did not believe in ghosts?" she said.

"No more I do." Hans found his valour return, now that a friendly sandhill intervening hid the churchyard from him. "I believe it's old, cracked Signete, looking among the graves for her child; I heard say she was back in these parts."

"Signete! poor Signete! Who told you she had come back?"

"That fisherman at Morten's, Kung Petersen."

"Then if it is Signete, and not a ghost, Hans, you won't mind going

to the churchyard with me, and helping me persuade the poor thing to come home with us and get some supper."

"I don't believe father will want her, and I shan't do any such thing."



They had passed the sandhill, and the churchyard was now again in view, also the white figure, who was now standing erect, tossing her arms and apparently talking to herself in great excitement. Signete,



the poor lunatic, was well known in all the villages and scattered homesteads around the Nissumford. Ten years before, she had returned from a journey to a distant town, where she had been to see her dying father and close his eyes—she had returned to find her own home desolate, for her husband and three sons had during her absence been attacked by a fever then prevalent, had sunk under it, and were quickly buried, to save others from infection. The poor woman fell sick of the fever herself, but had recovered her health, although at the price of her reason. She had ever since led a wandering life, making pilgrimages to different churchyards, imagining her husband and children to be buried, sometimes in one, sometimes in another. The loss which most affected her was that of her youngest child, a beautiful boy six years old. Everybody was kind to her, and ready to take her in, when she asked for food or shelter, which was not often, for she seemed hardly sensible of hunger or fatigue. The winter's cold seemed to stupify her and make her willing to remain quiet for several weeks together in the same place; but with the opening of spring buds, and the warmth of softer air, her restlessness always returned anew.

"There she is, now, Hans!"

"Kirstin, don't go!" he cried; "you don't know it is Signete—come away. I will never come this way with you again!" and he tried to hold her; but his sister, springing from him, cried, "Never mind; you go home then, and tell father I'm coming directly;" and without waiting for an answer she walked quickly towards the churchyard. As she reached the gate of the enclosure, which stood ajar, she was obliged to pause, she was not only out of breath but her heart beat fast. "Suppose Hans is right—what if it be not Signete?—but if it is!—and she must not be left here to starve." She crossed herself, and repeated one of her talismanic Psalm-verses. "No I will not be afraid for any terror by night. God will take care of me;" and she began walking again as quickly as before, towards the spot where the figure stood. Oh yes, it was clearly Signete, and no ghost; as she drew nearer she recognised the tattered grey cloak, from which all colour being washed out by rain and wind, the moonlight made look white. She ran forward, and putting her arm round the poor woman, said in the tone of gentle authority which kind-hearted people were wont to use towards her, as to a petted child, "Signete, dear, it is late; come now

and have some supper with me—at old Magnus Erickson's, you know—he will be so pleased to see you, and you are so cold in your thin cloak; come and warm yourself at the fire."

The face that was raised to Kirstin was indeed a ghost-like face, so bloodless, sharp, and emaciated were the features in the moonlight that the girl felt startled afresh, and was relieved when poor Signete, her mind taking hold of but one word she had heard, recommenced her chant, which she sung continually, ringing the changes on the one idea of her lost darling.

"Oh, tell me not his lips are cold.  
'Tis my sad heart, my heart is cold;  
We'll make each other warm again,  
In spite of snow, or hail, or rain."

Kirstin having in vain sought to gain her attention, began singing in her turn a soft low lullaby, which seemed to have a soothing effect, for after a few minutes Signete suffered herself to be half led, half carried in the direction of the fisherman's home. Hans was standing at the door, waiting.

"I'm sure father won't like it," said he; "but it's all your doing, you know."

Kirstin was almost too much out of breath to speak as she led her charge into the kitchen towards the fire. "Signete, father—I found her in the churchyard; she looks half starved."

It seemed that Hans was not far wrong, for Michael Erickson growled out in reply, "Give her some porridge, if you like, but I won't have my house made an inn. She must go away when she has supped, and I am not so fond of having visitors as you and Hans, remember that!"

"There, I knew I should be brought in," muttered Hans.

Kirstin was too busy first in chafing her guest's bloodless hands, then in warming some porridge, and lastly in feeding the poor woman, to give much heed to these remarks. The meal was soon finished; Signete's eyelids, heavy with sleep, drooped over her eyes, and she leaned back in Kirstin's arms. The girl looked up to her father and said, "Father, you will not send her out in the night, you will let her sleep in my bed, will you not?—she is so harmless and quiet."

Her pleading look was raised first to her father, but then to her grandfather, who had often before stood her friend on like occasions.

Nor did he fail her now, for as Michael stamped his foot and raised his voice to an angry pitch that promised little for Kirstin's success, the old man began : " Son Michael, do not you hinder the child from a kind action ; who knows ? some one of us may need a shelter some day, and the poor thing, as she says, is harmless."

Kirstin knew the battle was won, for if Michael exacted strict obedience from his children, it was no more than he had been wont to render in his time, and the white-haired old grandfather, though he very rarely interfered, was a real authority in the household still. The girl had just time to thank him with a grateful look, when her father addressed her in a tone of decision :

" Look here, Kirstin ; she may sleep in my house to-night, as your grandfather is on your side ; but recollect it's for the last time that she, or anybody else, comes here, except by my own invitation. Those who are so fond of having guests should have houses of their own. And she must sleep in your bed ; I'll have no one prying and spying about the place. Take her to bed at once."

Kirstin was only too glad to obey. When she returned to the kitchen, the fisherman, still out of temper, was rating his son for something done or left undone, and Hans darted a look of keen reproach at his sister, as much as to say, " It's all your fault." She could not feel sorry ; in spite of all these discomforts she went about her work, washing up and putting away the supper things with a light heart. " I am so glad I was not too much afraid," thought she ; " I am glad I brought poor Signete home." One by one, the three men of the household betook themselves to their repose, and then Kirstin, last, as always, brought in some dry straw, and prepared her own couch on the floor near the fire. She was later than usual, and, thoroughly tired, fell asleep the minute she lay down to rest.

But although Kirstin was last to go to bed, she was usually the first stirring in the morning, and next day, owing perhaps to the discomforts of her couch, she awoke sooner than usual. The summer nights in Jutland are very brief ; it was only four o'clock, but the larks had sung their joyous morning hymn long ago when she went out to milk her father's one cow. She came back, her pail on her head, singing as gaily as the larks themselves, but checked her song on discovering her guest of the night before lying down in one of the outhouses. " Good-morning, Signete ! you are out early," she said ; but she soon became

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aware that Signete must have been sleeping here, for as she helped her to rise, she found her cloak drenched with dew. She led her into the kitchen, and began preparing the breakfast; only her grandfather was there, smoking his pipe. "Your guest did not like her quarters, it seems, Kirstin," said he, in a low voice; "you must not ask her here again."

"What do you mean?" she inquired.

"I mean that I saw her creep out at sunrise this morning; and when I came out myself an hour ago, while you were milking, she was lying asleep in the outhouse; it is the sort of place she is used to sleep in, but your father will not like it at all."

No more was said on the subject, and Michael and his son coming in presently, they all sat down, Signete with them, to their breakfast, which consisted, like the supper of the night before, of fried fish, porridge, milk, butter, and beer. The fisherman had recovered his good-humour this morning; he only now and then eyed his poor guest uneasily, as though eager to get rid of her. He had not long to wait; poor Signete, whom Kirstin with difficulty had persuaded to make a good meal, as soon as the girl's attention was diverted, stole out of the kitchen. Michael got up, and watched her till she was out of sight, gliding quietly among the sandhills towards the churchyard.

"You don't get much thanks," said Hans to his sister.

"I don't want thanks; I only wanted to keep the poor thing from starving," she replied, and got up in her turn, and, as usual, collected her brother's books, slate, &c., for it was nearly time for him to set out for school. The aged grandfather had finished his pipe, and now set about his daily work, wood-carving, fashioning, rudely it must be owned, the beaks of ships out of such material as he could procure. His half-finished specimens of art lay strewn about the floor; here perched a raven, there stood erect a full-length figure of some mail-clad hero of olden time; here sprawled a mermaid, there the Danish coat-of-arms with all its tale of lions complete, but the hearts still wanting. For the old man, though perfectly happy over his work, was capricious in it: he would go on most zealously for a time, and then suddenly get tired of his own idea, and give up one thing to begin another. There was really something of the artist in him, and he was often disgusted with his own lack of skill, having begun the craft too late in life for his unsteady fingers to gain much facility.

To-day Kirstin had not Karen to look after, Morten being at home,

so she was comparatively at leisure. In the afternoon she wrote two copies, and then sat down to knit, repeating the while the lesson set her by her brother, who was her only teacher. Hans was really proud of being her teacher, and glad to have one at home to sympathize in his pursuits. He came in from school rather late this evening, for Mr. Gröndal had wanted him to go on an errand to the parsonage. Hans was giving Kirstin an account of this errand, and of the peep he had had into Mr. Nordenfelt's museum of curiosities, when the fisherman, who had been absent all day, also entered.

"Hans," said he, abruptly, "did you feed the pig this morning?"

"No,—I—did not you, Kirstin?" The lad looked to his sister.

"It is your business, and not your sister's, to answer me. Did you or not?"

"I did not," replied he, sullenly.

"Oh! I am so sorry, father, I forgot it," cried Kirstin, instinctively taking the blame on herself.

"It was all that horrid old woman's fault," said her brother, forgetting his prudence in his desire to screen himself.

"Pray how long have you been doing your brother's work as well as your own?" asked the fisherman of his daughter.

"Only this week," she replied.

"Then remember you are not to do it in future. I have always said I could not afford to keep a servant, after you, Hans, and your sister were old enough to do the work of the household. You know why I am saving—that you may go to school; you may give up all thoughts of it if you will not do the little work I have allotted to your share. No lazy mouths shall be fed at my expense." And the fisherman sat down and smoked his pipe with energy.

The evening was thoroughly uncomfortable, for Hans was sulky and his father displeased. Kirstin made an opportunity of going up to her brother when he was alone, to say, "Hans, I am so sorry."

"Well you may be sorry," he replied, unpropitiated. "It was because you would go after that horrible old idiot; I told you you shouldn't do it."

So Kirstin retreated uncomforted. As she undressed that night she questioned herself, "Was I wrong in bringing home poor Signete? I could not know she would make father angry, and me forgetful. But even if I had known it, what then? better we should both be scolded

than that she had died of cold and hunger. Yes; and I was always to do right, and not think about consequences; Pastor Nordenfelt said I must be a grown-up Christian now I am confirmed, and try to do as our Lord would have done in my place. Ah! He was a poor woman's child, and got into trouble sometimes. He must pity Signete, I am sure. Poor Signete!"

And having settled the difficulty with her conscience, Kirstin's last waking thought was a prayer for the houseless wanderer.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A SOCIAL EVENING.

ABOUT a fortnight after Signete's visit the fisherman's family were seated at supper, when Morten Ranildsen came in. After bestowing a general greeting he said, "My errand is to you, Magnus Ericksen; I have a bit of timber for you which I found on the shore this evening, and thought you might make useful."

He set down a large piece of wood in the corner of the room. Old Magnus thanked him heartily, and Michael bade him take his supper with them. He did so: everybody was pleased, and they were soon in friendly talk. Morten exerted himself to be agreeable, and succeeded in interesting them all by giving an account of an expedition to Iceland, where he had been engaged in a whale fishery.

"How long were you in Iceland?" asked Hans.

"Two years altogether: you see it was not very pleasant at home; I was not wanted while my stepfather lived, so I went over there partly to be out of the way. I was only twelve then, but there were many boys engaged as servants in the large farms there, and here nobody wanted me—besides, I preferred being away."

"I should rather think so," observed Michael; "what lad of spirit but likes to see foreign parts?"

"Tell us about the long winters, Morten, and how you got through them," said Kirstin, who had now taken up her knitting, that being her "company work."

"Well, I did not find them so very long either. In the house where I was engaged the family was large: we were all comfortable together; the other servants were the sons and daughters of poor farmers or orphans; why, one of the young men had been sent there by his

friends in hopes that the master's daughter would take a fancy to him, and marry him."

"Did that plan succeed, I wonder?" asked Michael.

"Not in this case, for the fellow, though good-looking enough, was idle and ill-tempered; but the thing is often done. Well, we got up at six o'clock in the winter, and each of us set about our allotted work. Of course all could not be together: one fellow would be making horse-shoes in the smithy, another would be sent after the sheep, a third must mind the cows, but the rest were in the same room, and while employed in different ways, the men making horse-hair ropes, or preparing sheep-skins for fishing dresses, the women spinning or weaving, one of the party would read aloud in a singing tone."

"That was pleasant indeed," said Kirstin; "what sort of books had they?"

"Tales or histories: some were not unlike those your grandfather used to tell us when we were children. The master, indeed, had not many books, but then we borrowed them of all the people round. We never went out, except on Sundays; for you see, Hans, the smithy, and the cattle-house, and other things, are all under cover, the farm consisting of a cluster of little buildings, so that weather does not matter. But on Sundays every one not wanted at home went to church, and then we met our neighbours and had a chat, and exchanged our books in the churchyard. Sometimes, when we had had a long day's work, we had games, and I learned to play chess and draughts. Still I confess I was not sorry when winter was over, and there was more variety, and more stir. You see there is such a constant change of work in an Icelandic farm: there's the fishing season, and the hay-making, and the gathering the sheep from off the mountains, before winter sets in,—that is real good fun."

"Tell us about that," said Hans.

"When the hay harvest is over, notice is given in the churches that sheep-gathering will commence on such a day, and the place for meeting is named. The time I was there two hundred men came to the place on horseback: they pitched their tents, and gave their horses to the care of some boys who were with them. First of all they chose their king, the man of the most experience among them, and he chose two councillors to help him. Well, the king remains on horseback and sends the men out, two and two together in different

directions: they collect as many sheep as they can find, and drive them towards the tents. When a week had been spent in this way, the sheep were all driven into a large pen, and a number of smaller pens were set up around it, into which were driven the sheep as they were separated from the rest by their respective owners. Of course there was a rare quarrelling over disputed sheep, and the lamentations of the poor things when parted from each other were piteous to hear."

"Are all the sheep sent to the mountains? it must be poor feeding for them," observed Michael.

"No, certainly not; the best are kept at home, but the law requires the farmers to send all the unproductive animals to the mountains in the month of May, so that the fine grass which grows on little hillocks surrounding the houses may be kept for milch cows, and ewes, and also for making into hay."

"I suppose the mountains are very fine," said Hans.

"Near the Whale Fiord they are grand to look at, and capped with snow. And such silence as reigns among them! I had two hundred miles to go from the farm to the whale fishery. They took me in for the night in whatever cottage I might pass, but the journey—it was so lonely. You heard the eagle's scream, and the plover's whistle—no other sound for miles. Once we came upon the remains of a woman, whose bones lay scattered about, one foot and leg left in her stocking separate from the rest. She must have lost her way, fallen over a precipice, and become food for eagles and foxes. Then the people would tell one such wild tales! worse than those old Elsa will worry little Karen with. But it's no wonder they should be fond of hearing of wonders in such a wonderful country. You've heard about Mount Hecla and the Hot Springs, haven't you?"

"Oh yes, often. And didn't you say once you went bear-hunting?"

"There were as many as thirteen bears came over from Greenland the last winter I spent in Iceland: they came in carriages, as it were, floated over the sea upon icebergs, and by the time they arrived they were hungry, so they went ravaging among the flocks; and when we found out what they were after, we went out in a party and shot them down with muskets."

"It's a wonder to me, Morten," said Michael, "that a strong young fellow like you, without ties, should be content to dawdle life away in a place like this, when there's bear-hunting, and whale-fishing, and



what not elsewhere. Why not go travelling again? and some half-dozen years hence have more to tell us of your exploits."

He looked the young man full in the face as he spoke, and his tone was so sarcastic as to be unpleasant. Unasked advice is always unpalatable, and Morten coloured as he replied, he was not entirely without ties; he thought it his duty to look after his little sister.

"Stay at home to look after a girl! can't you trust your neighbours to do that? No, no, Morten, don't waste your time; let us hear of your getting fame, and hunting bears."

The young man had a quick temper, though he usually took pains to subdue it. "There are bears elsewhere than in Iceland," he began; then, changing his tone, he turned away from Michael to the old man, and added, "You used to tell a capital story about bears in Denmark, Magnus Ericksen, do you remember? but I suppose that belonged to hundreds of years ago."

"Ah, grandfather, I wish you would tell us that story again," entreated Kirstin.

"Do, just in return for the long yarn I have been spinning," said Morten.

People always wondered where Magnus Ericksen had learned his stories, they were so different to any told by the peasants of the Nissumfiord. Probably in his youth he had heard some of the ancient northern sagas read aloud, and in reciting the stories, two or three had got blended in his mind, while his imagination filled up freely the gaps in his memory. On this occasion the story demanded was a freely-handled version of Bodver Biarki's saga.

After its recital, eager thanks were spoken by the old man's grandchildren.

"Thanks from me, too," said Morten; "it is a splendid story, and I have enjoyed it just as I used to do in the old times; do you remember, Kirstin?" She nodded assent. "But I am keeping you all up; good-night."

"Good-night, Morten, and recollect what I have said; I would go half over the world if I were a young fellow with no one belonging to me." Thus spoke the master of the house meaningly.

Morten changed colour again. "I will think of what you have said," he replied; then turning to Kirstin, who, conscious that he was annoyed, stood near the entrance with something like a reflection of

the same feeling in her own face, he said, "Good-bye, Kirstin," and pressed her hand.

"Oh, Morten! you hurt me," said the girl, drawing it away.

"I beg pardon," he said, abruptly; he was on the point of adding, "It is the last time; your father has given me notice to quit," but he restrained himself, and in the twilight the bitter smile on his lips was not seen as he turned away.

"I don't see why Morten is to go to Iceland again. I am sure I hope he'll stay here, don't you, Kirstin?" said Hans. But Kirstin knew by instinct there was something in the minds of her father and Morten: she could not tell what it was, so she made no answer, but hastened her preparations for the night's repose.

(*To be continued.*)

## VERY NEAR.



**H**ILDBRENN, will you hear a story?

I have one I wish to tell,  
'Tis about the stately mansions

In the country where I dwell.  
Fair they are, of fine proportions,

Wrought with art within, without,  
And—oh wonder of all wonders—  
Can be moved at will about!

Talk of scientific progress—

Giant strides of skill and mind;  
Modern marvels of invention,  
Leaving miracles behind!

What are they to this I tell of,  
Worthy old enchantment's days;  
When the master's lightest wishes  
His obedient house obeys!

See the windows—not mere openings  
Letting in one only view,  
But machines constructing pictures  
Ever fresh yet ever true.

These, too, stored in upper chambers,  
Serve for reference day by day;  
When the master would remember  
Scenes and people past away.

See the portals—two admitting

Sounds that make alive or kill;  
One which sends them forth to  
others—

Mighty power for good or ill.

This, too, the appointed entrance  
For the stores the house requires,  
To repair the waste from usage—  
To support the constant fires.

"Then the houses are not lasting?"

No—the strongest must decay.  
Till their very owners leave them,  
And they crumble quite away.  
But from out the scattered ruins  
Others shall one day arise;  
God the builder—God the owner—  
Everlasting in the skies.

Now my ballad riddle's ended,

Now my mystic tale is told;  
Now you know the stately mansions  
Every one of you enfold.


Prize them for their wondrous beauty,  
Guard them as a gracious loan;  
Keep and use them in all honour,  
Knowing they are not your own.

EDITOR.

## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### WRECKED.

MORTEN RANILDSSEN went home, feeling too restless and irritated for sleep. He tried to persuade himself that the few animals belonging to the homestead required looking after, so he fidgeted about the place, in and out, though really all the time he knew there was nothing to be done. A strong temptation came upon him to do as so many of his comrades did—drown bitter thoughts at the public-house; but Morten had seen so much in his boyhood of the poignant misery and degradation following self-indulgence, and had registered within his soul so solemn a vow against sinful pleasures of any sort, that the recollection sufficed to restrain him now. No, whatever fate had in store for him, Morten would be master of himself.

He took a turn on the sea-shore by way of calming his mind: the glorious flood of moonlight seemed to bathe his forehead and cool it, and the balmy, yet fresh air of summer, the monotonous splash of the tide, were soothing too. After all, perhaps Michael was right. He was too young to settle down in this out-of-the-world place; well, of course he could enjoy seeing and doing more. He would go away for two years; but for six, as Michael had urged, that was out of the question: what might not happen in six years? Having formed his resolution he felt more easy in his mind, and turned homeward. The sandhills looked strangely in the moonlight, almost as white as if they had been covered with snow: he made his way through them, entered his house, and throwing off his coat lay down on his bed. In a few minutes he was asleep.

A hand tapping briskly at the window-panes, a familiar voice, raised far above its usual key, woke him. "Morten! Morten!" it cried; "wake up, Morten! wake up!" That voice mingled strangely with his dreams at first; but the tones rising shriller in the effort to wake him, he sprang upright. "Kirstin!" he exclaimed in amazement.

"A wreck!" she almost shrieked in low, terrified accents,—"*a wreck!*"

Morten did not wait to put on his coat. Hastening to take a flask of brandy from his stores, he was out of the house in a minute, and soon overtook the girl, who had hurried on to the shore.

"The storm woke me up," she said. "I looked out of window and could just see the ship: it is a large ship, making signals of distress. I woke father, and he is on the shore already. Hans went one way to call the Petersens, our neighbours, and I came for you. Now, don't wait for me, run!" Morten did not stay for a second bidding.

But Kirstin was not long after him: in a few seconds she, too, stood on the shore. It was two o'clock; the dawn was beginning already, but the air was misty. The sea, so calm a few hours ago when Morten had been cooling his feelings on the shore, was now in visible commotion. The waves grew larger and larger; the west wind, abroad in his might, sighed through the grass of the sandhills, tossed up the loose sand, and flung showers of sea-spray into the girl's face. Half-buried in the sand-reef lay the vessel. Michael, the Petersens, father and son, and one or two more fishermen were preparing to push off a boat to the rescue. It was on such an occasion as this that Michael Ericksen's strength, experience, and energy of will were displayed at best advantage. All gave way to him: he issued a few brief orders in his deep authoritative voice, and the others carried them out. Morten and a few others stood on the shore, waiting to see what was left for them to do: the number of spectators increased every minute.

Kirstin, not finding her brother who had been sent to fetch blankets, came and stood by Morten. Together they watched Michael's boat as it successfully surmounted the first sand-reef, and approached the vessel stranded upon the second; they watched the ship-passengers enter the boat: two of them were women, one of whom carried a child. Now for the boat's return over the sand-reef nearest the shore. It lay marked out, a wide streak of continuous foam: the boat plunges across it—an immense wave lifts its crest over the boat—it is overturned—rescuers and rescued are all alike plunged into the wild sea, yet only a stone's throw from the land. Slight fear for the fishermen, they are practised swimmers and know that the tide is in their favour.

The woman who carried the child had flung her arm round a piece of the ship; Morten's eye is upon the other. "'Oh, save her! save the poor lady!'" cried Kirstin. He plunged headlong into the sea; Kirstin saw him wrestling with the waves—saw him grasp hold of the poor sinking

woman, and knew that she would be saved. Her eyes then sought the other clinging to the wreck; the woman had been torn from her anchorage, and was soon engulfed by the waves, the child seemed floating towards the shore. Without considering her own danger, Kirstin sprang into the water: she could swim like a mermaid, but not in such a sea as this. She caught hold of the child, but the waves seized her, and her strength failed; she was flung with violence upon the shore, her arms folded round the child.

Kirstin had fainted; when she opened her eyes it was to see Morten holding his flask of brandy to her lips. "How could you be so mad?" he said, angrily.

"I did no more than you," she replied; "only I could not do it. Let me get up; where's the lady? where's the child?"

"The child is all right, take some of this at once." She obeyed for the moment. "Now let me go," and springing from him, she ran up to the spot where her father, brother, and some others were engaged restoring animation to the poor half-drowned woman whom Morten had rescued. "Yes, you had better go there," said Morten: "I can't deal with women, but I can see to this boy:" and he then bestowed his undivided attention upon the pale little child who lay beside him on the sand. His consciousness had returned, his foot was bleeding, and he moaned with pain.

"Hans!" shouted Morten, "bring me a blanket." Hans came accordingly. "Help me wrap it round him—so; now go and ask your father whether I shall carry him to his house or mine, for he must be put to bed, and the doctor must look to him. Kirstin will be a better nurse than old Else, otherwise I would take the little fellow in without asking." Hans executed his commission, and presently Michael Ericksen came up. His usual parsimony was quite overpowered by the greatness of the emergency—for a wreck is an occasion that always opens Jutland hearts, and shows what a fund of the milk of human kindness they contain. He bade Morten carry the child to his house without more ado, and sent Hans in search of the pastor as the most efficient doctor near at hand, and reliable in all difficulties.

The child's father, who, like most of the crew, had swum safely to shore, came up and expressed his thanks in Danish.

"It was Kirstin Ericksen, that young girl, who rescued your child," said Morten.

"And you who saved my wife—I know," said the stranger; "and you," turning to Michael, "who would fain have saved us all."

Michael, not much delighting in conversation with strangers, replied in a conclusive tone that he had sent for the pastor to speak to him, and the foreigner understood the hint to mean that till the pastor came he was to be silent.

Kirstin, meantime, was engaged in active co-operation with a few others of her own sex in restoring animation to the child's mother. The sun was just risen, and the red clouds of morning lighted up the scene: a throng of half-drowned, dripping men, most of them glad to refresh themselves with the cordials carefully provided by Hans and the Petersens, as well as Morten. The stranger who had been pouring out his thanks, now bent over his wife.

"See, she opens her eyes, she will live!" cried Kirstin, joyfully. The husband took his wife's hand, and said, "Esther!" and at the sound of his voice, she looked up with an expression of mute inquiry. "Alec is saved," he said in English; "thank God, all is right, Esther!"

"Carry her to our house now, she must have food," said Kirstin, and her recommendation was speedily acted upon. She led the way to Michael Ericksen's home; at the entrance they met Hans with the pastor, and also the schoolmaster, which latter functionary Hans had summoned on his own responsibility, secretly considering him the greater man of the two, as more enlightened and less old-fashioned. Kirstin was of a different opinion, but she was too busy just now to argue on any subject; she had much to do and might well be hurried. Morten had lighted a fire and begun to prepare some warm porridge. The little boy was lying on the floor wrapped in his blanket: he was still moaning with pain. His mother's eyes sparkled on seeing him, but she was too weak to stand, and could not go to him. "Oh, if I could but speak to her!" said Kirstin to Morten; and to her surprise, he went up to the lady and explained to her in broken English that he was going to put the little boy to bed, to get him warm, and rest his wounded foot; would she like the gentleman or the young girl to help? She understood him perfectly, and looking at her husband, said, "Go, Angus, go;" whereupon he followed Morten with the child to the sleeping-room, and Kirstin was left behind in charge of the mother. Now for the first time she could look at her: the sight of any helpless woman in such circumstances would have stirred up deep emotion; how much

more when she saw before her a slight, delicate form, with regular features, the countenance, even in its languor, beautiful in expression and sweetness. As one of the fishermen's wives supported her, Kirstin knelt by her side and carefully dried her hair. "Golden-hair like a mermaid's," she thought; "it lies braided on the smooth white forehead like the crown on a queen's head; and how soft it is! and what a sweet voice when she speaks—so pleasant to hear, though one knows not the words, and her dress so fine and so nice!" Kirstin was just at the age when girls of an enthusiastic temperament are ready to fall down and worship some one of their own sex if superior to themselves in education, in personal attractions, or mental gifts. Here was a lady fair of face, of gentle breeding, inspiring sympathy by her situation; the fisherman's daughter fell in love with her on the spot. Ever afterwards Kirstin would at any moment have given her life for this unknown and mysterious "Esther" whom Morten had rescued from a watery grave.

The stranger rallied more and more, and smiled when noticing Kirstin's eagerness to serve her. "Oh, Morten!" exclaimed the girl as he re-entered the kitchen, "will you ask her if she will condescend to wear clothes of mine? hers ought to be dried, but I cannot ask her." Morten executed the commission with praiseworthy gravity, but the lady's husband re-entering, replied for her in Danish, "Thanks, my good girl, help me take her to your room, and then dress her as you please, and make her lie down on your bed." And the matter was arranged without further reference to the stranger's wishes. There was then a short colloquy between the gentleman and Morten, which ended in a potion of some sort being administered, which had the effect of sending the patient to sleep.

When, after some hours, she awoke, it was to see her little boy, a pale delicate child of five years old, lying beside her. He was still unable to sleep, but his pain was better, and he could smile at his mother and answer her inquiries in a cheerful voice. They were not left together long; Kirstin was presently peeping in at the door to see if her guest were awake; she retired and summoned the gentleman, whom she had now learnt to know as Mr. Ramsey, to come and look at his wife and child. He stood by the bedside, caressing them both by turns, and Kirstin, as she waited at the door to see if she was wanted, thanked God out of a full heart that this loving trio had been spared to each other. Mr. Ramsey was not so good-looking as his wife and

son, both of whom had regularly handsome features, and were exquisitely fair; but his face was pleasant and sensible in expression, such a one as inspired confidence. Kirstin wished she knew English and could understand what he said.

But she could guess the subject of their discourse, for when, after an anxious inquiry made by the wife, answered by a sudden gravity on the part of the husband, she saw Mrs. Ramsey cover her face and weep, she felt that the sad fate of the little boy's nurse had been made known to her. The poor woman's corpse had been washed upon the sand by the tide just after Kirstin had left the shore. The captain, too, was missing, but most of the sailors had succeeded in swimming to land as Mr. Ramsey had done. Kirstin loved the lady all the more on seeing those tears.

However, she had much to do, and must return to her household duties, which were to-day on a larger scale than usual. In about an hour Kirstin came in the room again, and, addressing herself blushing to Mr. Ramsey, who could in some measure understand her, said the dinner was ready, would not he go into the family room? She could help the lady to rise, and then bring his dinner to the little boy in bed. Her speech was duly translated, and her hospitable cares were soon rewarded by seeing Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey both seated between her father and grandfather. She had neither time nor inclination herself to sit down; she flitted about, waiting upon all. Hans, too, was there, for school was not to be thought of on such a morning of excitement; and Michael had invited the pastor and schoolmaster to join them, as they could talk to the Englishman. Mr. Gröndal had excused himself on the ground of pressing occupation; but Mr. Nordenfelt, the grey-haired pastor, was only too pleased for the opportunity of lavishing his old-fashioned courtesies upon the fair lady, and exercising his rather peculiar English for her benefit.

Kirstin coloured with delight when the lady, her speech paraphrased by Mr. Nordenfelt, praised her cookery, and said she did not in the least care for butchers' meat, the lack of which in these out-of-the-way places the pastor had been deploring. The fish was good, the porridge she pronounced excellent, so was Kirstin's butter, and the red-grod or red-serve, a sort of national dish in Jutland, was quite new to her, and Kirstin must teach her how to make it. The pastor attempted to give a receipt: "Look, my lady, you take the juice of raspberry, or of



currant, or of cherry, or of all together if you please, and you boil them with rice—rice chopped up very small, you know, it is like flour, and then you put it into a mould with isinglass—there, now you laugh at me! it is shameful, I will no more teach you; it is Kirstin Ericksen shall teach you, or one of my lazy maids."

Michael now got up from table; the gentleman must excuse him, the sea was calm again, and he must go out, and there were his nets to be mended; Hans must help him a while and then be off to his master's.

"And I must be off, too," said Mr. Nordenfelt, "and I will not ask the lady to-day to see my farm, and my church, and my museum. She is not good, she must rest. But you, Mr. Ramsey, you will come with me?"

"Yes, I will come," said Mr. Ramsey; "but Esther, it seems hard to leave you to the mercy of the natives with whom you cannot interchange a word. I think I had better look up that handsome young fisherman who was your preserver, and who speaks English after a fashion."

"Morten Ranildsen will be fishing," objected the pastor; "he is one good lad and kind, but he cannot stay with the lady to-day."

"Oh! I shall do very well without the handsome young fisherman," said Mrs. Ramsey; "I have my little one to look after, and I shall be glad for you, Angus, to discuss those matters we were speaking of with our kind friend here, who has been doctoring my poor little boy."

And the "lady," it seemed, did very well in her husband's absence: she flitted about from the kitchen to the bedroom, petting her little boy. She astonished Hans as he sat mending his nets, his book in his lap, by addressing him in a few words of Latin—Hans ever after admired her as a woman of almost incredible attainments. She examined the grandfather's carvings, and watched him at work; she then, to Kirstin's utter dismay, insisted upon helping her in clearing away the remains of the late meal; and that done, she took up Kirstin's company work, the petticoat she had been knitting for poor Signete, and making her give some directions in pantomime, went on with the coarse work quite successfully and happily. Esther Ramsey had the blessed gift of being able to adapt herself to circumstances, and though her health was delicate, her spirits were elastic, and she was young

enough to enjoy thoroughly anything like an adventure. By the time her husband returned she was perfectly at home in her new abode.

"Well, it is a treat to have some one to speak to," said she; "there is a chance for your society being at last duly appreciated by your wife, Angus, for our poor little fellow is too full of pain to bear talking, and I have been tongue-tied all the afternoon. That's a nice-looking girl, and a good girl too, I am sure; but I had sooner undertake to teach English to her brother,—she colours up so, and seems so afraid of me. The brother looks intelligent and not much scared, but he has gone off to his work: the old man regards me as a mermaid, I think, he has just the look one would fancy in those who see mermaids: as for the fisherman himself, he is a sort of Neptune, born to rule the storm."

"They are certainly fine fellows, the fishermen here," said her husband. "I have just been to the shore and seen them go off. There they came all together, carrying their nets and oars: they laid them in the boat, which had been left under the shelter of the sandhills, set their backs against it, half on one side half on the other, to push it out into the sea, singing all the while a most extraordinary ditty; the burden seemed to be

" 'I to-morrow, thou to-day;  
I drink and thou pay:' "

ending with 'Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!' in such deep bass tones and with the utmost gravity. And then immediately after the bacchanalian song they all take off their hats, kneel down, their faces towards the gunwale, and say a prayer in silence. Not a sound escapes their lips: they get up, silently push the boat farther into the water, and jump into it."

"And look at that girl now," said his wife; "actually dusting the bookshelf with a goose-wing! a new sort of duster, or rather a primitive one. Certainly this is more like learning the manners and customs of the natives than we had reckoned on."

"It is fortunate for us," rejoined Mr. Ramsey, "that, as we were fated to be shipwrecked on the Jutland coast, the mischance has happened in the year 1833, and not a few centuries earlier. We should have been greeted with a different sort of welcome then; rifled of whatever little was left us, even to the clothes on our backs, and soundly

beaten, without distinction of persons, if we dared to complain. Now, the pastor says, not a thing the waves wash ashore will be taken so long as any one of us lays claim to it. But the softening of manners in this country is something wonderful; there is not a milder, or more humane people than these Danes; even almost immediately after that abominable affair of the bombardment of Copenhagen, Englishmen were received here as hospitably as possible. It was not their fault but that of their government, the people said: true, but few nations would have been equally reasonable."

"Nevertheless, our host looks just like a descendant of the ancient Vikings," observed Mrs. Ramsey. "I should think he could be fierce enough upon occasion."

"Well, the pastor allows that he bears the character of a very opinionated and obstinate fellow, but if we trust his report, Esther, you have fallen on your feet. That girl, he declares, is the flower of his flock, the very best girl in the parish. She lost her mother when very young, and her father has kept her close to her household work, never suffering her to attend fairs or harvest-homes, which the pastor says are the ruin of young girls; and so, although it sometimes seemed rather hard, she has been kept from intercourse with giddy, unprincipled young people, and has thus preserved all the simplicity and freshness of a child. And yet, he declares, she has the capacity and self-devotion of a full-grown woman. He prepared her lately for confirmation, and I assure you the old man waxed quite poetical over her virtues, declaring, 'It is the purest soul I have ever known, transparent as crystal.'"

"Poetical indeed," said the lady, laughing; "and pray what does he say of your handsome young fisherman?"

"Morten Ranildsen, that is his name, bears an excellent character for steadiness, sobriety, and attention to his religious duties, which the pastor acknowledges is not usually the case with the fishermen of these parts. His mother, it seems, was renowned for her beauty. She gave the young man a stepfather who squandered all her property, ill-treated her and her son, and finally drank himself to death. The youth was away at the time: he returned to find his mother dying of grief, and to undertake the care of his little half-sister, to whom he has been a most tender and careful guardian. He has religiously avoided the errors of his stepfather, so that the proverb applies to him, 'He drinks like a

cow.' A cow, be it observed, Esther, never drinks more than she requires : that is not the case with the Petersens, the two fishermen who were Ericksen's mates in launching the boat for our rescue ; they, father and son alike, are said to be confirmed drunkards."

"You seem to have got everybody's history by heart, Angus," said Mrs. Ramsey ; "what a gossip the worthy pastor must be."

"Oh ! you may trust all these Danish fellows for knowing their flocks. A pastor in Iceland showed me a book kept as neatly as my ledger, in which was entered the name, residence, age, occupation, character, and even the number of books in possession of every man in his parish. However, we talked of other things and made all necessary arrangements. You see, Esther, the old man is a bachelor, and though his farm is tidy enough, his house shows the want of a presiding genius ; his servants are careless, and thus our little Alec would stand slight chance of being attended to by them. He will take me in, as there is not room for all of us at Ericksen's, but Kirstin will be the best nurse for Alec while he is so poorly, and when the little man is better we can all remove to the pastor's."

"And how are we to recompense the fisherman for the expense and trouble we have occasioned him ?"

"Well, there will be some difficulty in that, for Michael Ericksen is said to be haughty and not easily managed. Apparently we must do as he pleases in the matter : he is not badly off, though so parsimonious as to refuse to keep a servant ; he is supposed to be saving money that his daughter may be an heiress."

"I hope she may be one if it will make her happy ; she and the pastor's model youth should make a match of it."

"It shows the sympathy that exists between us, Esther, that the same idea occurred to me. But Mr. Nordenfelt did not encourage it. He said such an engagement would only end in disappointment, for Morten was poor, and Michael ambitious. The girl herself is luckily too much of a child to entertain thoughts of marriage."

"All the better for her. For my part I think Morten might do very well without an alliance with the Ericksens ; he is so handsome and clever, Kirstin is in comparison commonplace."

"I do not agree with you there, Esther ; he is older, and his character and feelings are more developed. His countenance is perhaps more expressive—but look at her now, see what beautiful eyes she has ;

as she gazes at you she seems like Pygmalion's statue waking into life."

At that moment Kirstin was kneeling in front of the fire, busied in preparing supper. In the interval between some of her culinary operations she had fixed her eyes upon Mrs. Ramsey, with a look of intense admiration, but upon seeing she had attracted the lady's notice she coloured and turned away her face.

Mrs. Ramsey also felt abashed, and turning to her husband said, "What can she mean by that look?"

"I think I can tell better than she could herself," he replied; "she has fallen in love with you, Esther. Luckily for my peace of mind it is not the handsome young fisherman, but the old fisherman's commonplace daughter, who has fallen under the spell of Queen Esther."

*(To be continued.)*

## THE DISCONTENTED DONKEY.

A FABLE FOUNDED ON FACT.


**I**N a green and pleasant pasture, close to a parsonage house, and bordered on one side by umbrageous elms, and on the two others by the road and the parson's orchard, revelled at his ease an old shaggy ass.

He was an ass who had seen much of the world, and had experienced as many of the ups and downs of life, especially of the latter, as most of his species; for the fact was, that little else than hard words, hard blows, and hard work, together with scanty fare and the poorest lodging, had fallen to his lot. But great was the change in his fortunes when he was purchased to draw the old donkey-chair, in which the clergyman's wife, an invalid, used to take the air, and pay little visits of kindness to her neighbours, the poor villagers. At first, indeed, he could scarcely believe his senses when he found himself the sole occupier of the rich green paddock, and with so little to do too! for the chair was light, and the poor lady never went far, nor out of a walk, and that only in fine weather, and when she felt able, so that it may well be supposed that Master Ned thought himself "a very lucky fellow." And proud and happy he felt when drawing his kind mistress in the old chair, with her pretty daughter Eleanor merrily walking and chatting by his side. Not but that it must be owned the old ass, with his

## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER V.

#### FISHING IN THE NISSUMFIORD.

 KIRSTIN had never been so happy in all her life before. Light-hearted and contented indeed she had hitherto been, for the one grief of her childhood, the loss of her mother, was too far back to cloud her mental horizon; and her child-like, unselfish love for her father, brother, grandfather, and her two young companions, Morten and Karen, together with her affectionate reverence for her pastor, had, it seemed, sufficed to fill her heart. But now three new creatures were born into her world, as it were, one of them commanding a new and most engrossing sort of feeling, and her heart and whole nature seemed to expand to take it in, and give it room. Mr. Ramsey inspired the same sort of regard as she had already given to her father and the pastor: after the first day of their intercourse she felt no shyness, no constraint in his society, and it was such a blessing that he could understand her, and serve as interpreter between her and the lady. Alec, the pale, delicate child, was like another Karen to her—a being to protect, cherish, and fondle; but Mrs. Ramsey, with whom could she be compared? The love and admiration she inspired were feelings altogether new and most delightful. At first the object of this intense admiration received the girl's homage with amused indifference; as has been seen, she thought Kirstin less interesting than either her quick-eyed brother or the handsome young fisherman, Morten Ranildsen. But as day by day Alec's illness obliged her to protract her sojourn—as day by day she watched the girl's tenderness towards her child, and anxious efforts to amuse him—as she noted her ready submission to her father, her untiring sweetness of temper with her brother, her eagerness to learn whatever any one was willing to teach her—as, too, Kirstin's shyness wore off, and she was able to greet the strangers with a beaming smile instead of drooping eyelids and burning cheeks, Esther Ramsey retracted her verdict. No, Kirstin Ericksen was not commonplace, though so ignorant and unformed. They now began to converse a little, for Mrs. Ramsey had a turn for languages, and very quickly

picked up phrases of Danish: the vocabulary of Jutland peasants she found easily acquired, the same words and expressions recurring constantly and resembling English in pronunciation, although not in spelling.

Kirstin's incessant "War so artig," or "War so god"—"Be so good"—prefacing every little attempt at service, particularly amused Mrs. Ramsey. "I suppose there is something understood," she said to her husband; "it must mean 'Be so kind as to accept this from me,' does it not?"

"Very likely it may," was the reply; "I have become too much accustomed to it at the hotels to notice it: folks say the same everywhere in Copenhagen as well as in Jutland. The phrase that has always struck me as odd is their answer when you wish them 'Good day,' viz., 'Tak for sidste'—'Thanks for the last;' what can you make out of that?"

"I should think between friends it might mean, 'Thanks for the last kindness you showed me,' or 'for the last entertainment you gave me,' which is it?"

"The latter explanation is the right one, I believe. But between strangers the phrase is utterly senseless."

"You were not here this morning at breakfast, Angus; I was so delighted. That boy Hans dropped a piece of bread and did not trouble himself to pick it up, but the old grandfather starts up and puts it back on the table, saying, 'Pardon, Lord, if we have slighted Thy good gift,' and then he looks reproachfully at Hans, and says, 'We must not lay even the Bible on bread;' which, I imagine, is a proverb among them. But Hans shrugs his shoulders and looks superior: I fancy he learns that sort of thing from his schoolmaster."

"Well, since the other sort of thing delighted you so much, Esther," said Mr. Ramsey, smiling, "you are well off here, for in simplicity these Jutland peasants are the same as they were in the middle ages, however much they are altered for the better in other respects, such as hospitality to strangers. But you were always, as we say, 'thankful for small mercies,'" he added, stroking her head.

"More than for great ones perhaps, Angus," she replied, and her eyes filled with tears. "Ah! I cannot yet bear to look back and think of that dreadful shipwreck, and how nearly my darling had shared the fate of his nurse. Angus," she added, after a pause, "I have promised

to go for a walk with Kirstin, while little Karen is playing with Alec : will you come too and act as interpreter?"

"Willingly."

They left the two children on the floor together, the little boy with a heap of shells in his lap, watching the tiny blue-eyed nursemaid while she strung a number of birds' eggs into a necklace. It was a pretty sight, yet a sad one to the mother; for though Karen was evidently a delicate child, and the flush on her cheek was rather hectic than healthy, she looked even robust compared with the fragile form and colourless complexion of poor little Alec Ramsey. His mother sighed as she turned away; she had need of all her elastic spirits, her sanguine nature, to combat the despondency with which the doubtful state of her only little one filled her.

But the soft beauty of the summer afternoon soon restored her usual cheerfulness. They walked along a part of the fiord that runs far inland. Kirstin observing that the water here was hardly at all salt, almost sweet, the strangers had the curiosity to taste it, and found it was as she had stated; the freshness of the little streams intersecting Jutland in every direction here predominating over the saltiness of the German Ocean. Mr. Ramsey asked her if she knew whether the tides made a difference so far inland; she replied, "Yes; when the west wind blew the current in that direction the water rose 'so high' in the course of the day." "I see," he replied; "about four feet higher than now." The two stood looking into the calm blue mirror: Mrs. Ramsey seated herself upon a stone. "It is quiet to-day," said Kirstin; "if we had taken the other side of the fiord we might perhaps have heard the bell ringing under the water."

"What bell?" asked Mr. Ramsey.

"Ah! perhaps you will say, like Hans, it is all nonsense. But you see yonder is Thim Church?"

"Yes, I have passed it."

"Well, at Thim Manor House, in olden time, lived Sir Peter Gyldenstierne, of whom many tales are told. But this is certain, that the largest church bell in all Jutland hangs in Thim Church, and that Sir Peter brought it from Sweden during the wars. He saw two beautiful bells in a Swedish church, and wanted to carry them away, and did not know how to get them from the tower without damaging them. Then a Swedish peasant said he would tell him how, only he must



promise to provide for him all his life long; and Sir Peter gave the promise, and the peasant advised him to have a great mound of sand heaped up underneath, and to let the bells drop down gently one after the other upon the sand, which was done. But when the Swede claimed the promised reward, Sir Peter thrust his sword through the peasant's body, saying, 'Here is thy provision, thou traitor to thy country!' However, he gave a large sum of money to the man's widow. And the bells were sent by ship to Thim Church; but on the way the ship ran aground, and they were obliged to throw one bell overboard: the other bell hangs in Thim Church."

"And do you say you have heard the bell ringing under the water?" asked Mrs. Ramsey.

Kirstin coloured. "Sometimes I have fancied I heard it ringing on a quiet afternoon like this, or in the evening when I was bathing by moonlight in the fiord; and it seemed to sound so sad and soft, as though longing to hang with its sister-bell in Thim Church tower. Grandfather used to fancy this too, but Hans always laughed at us."

"And what other tales are told about Sir Peter Gyldenstierne?" inquired Mrs. Ramsey, for whose benefit her husband had translated the story of the bell.

"He was a very great man; he was Marshal of the kingdom; he was in love with a proud young lady of noble birth, who, when he asked her to marry him, replied, she would not give him her hand until he had built her a house on the spot which she would point out; and when he said he was ready to build wherever she wished, she drew a ring off her finger and flung it into the fiord, saying, 'As impossible as it is for me to get back that ring, so impossible is it for you to raise your mansion on the spot where it shall be found.' But after some time the ring was discovered inside a fish, so Sir Peter, after all, was able to build Thim Manor House on the spot where it was found when the fish was dragged to land."

Kirstin had addressed herself to Mrs. Ramsey in this story, trying to make her understand it at first-hand, and helping herself out with pantomime. In the course of the story she had possessed herself of the lady's hand, and gently drawn off one of her rings. "If I had been the knight," she concluded, "I would not have owed the ring and the lady to the fisherman who caught the fish, I would have dived after it night and day till I found it myself." She held up the ring to examine

it; a sudden gust of wind, such as will spring up in the quietest days on the western coast of Jutland, caught her dress and blinded her eyes with sand: she turned quickly round, the ring fell from her hand into the blue waters of the fiord.

"Oh, my ring!" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsey, "my precious ring! the first you gave me, Angus: I am so sorry!"

"Never mind," said her husband, "I will get you another like it." As for Kirstin, after her first cry of dismay she looked too blank to utter a word. Her first impulse was to undress herself and plunge into the fiord straightway, but Mr. Ramsey's presence rendered that impossible, and as the lady now got up, saying, "We will not stay any longer in this unlucky place," she had no choice but to follow, though the tears stood in her eyes with vexation. Mrs. Ramsey exerted herself to console her and divert her thoughts: "Why, Kirstin, did you not preserve to me a more precious jewel when you brought Alec on shore? never mind that trumpery trinket: how pretty that cottage looks with the stork's nest on the roof; I must make a sketch of it to show Alec;" and she took her husband's note-book and began a drawing on one of the blank leaves. Kirstin watched her progress with such interest as nearly to forget the ring, and then Mrs. Ramsey said, "What was that you were telling Mr. Ramsey about the stork's nest, Kirstin? try and tell it again so that I can understand it."

"It was only that people in these parts say that storks and swallows are holy birds, and their nests should never be disturbed, for they bring a blessing to the house they build upon. But the lapwing, they say, is an unblessed bird, and never to be welcomed, because it is supposed to have been originally a girl, who, when in service, although well treated, stole a pair of gold scissors from her mistress, and when accused of the theft said wickedly, 'If I have taken it, let me become a bird to fly over moor and moss, and cry "Thief, Thief;"' and so it was, she became a lapwing: and as a proof that she stole the gold scissors, the feathers of the lapwing's tail are shaped like a pair of scissors, and her cry sounds for ever like 'Thief, thief.' I know that tale is not true," added Kirstin; "but there is one story about birds I should like to think true, and that is about the turtle-dove."

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Ramsey.

"It is a song:—

"When on the cross Our Lord lay dying,  
 Above His head three birds came flying;

One white, one grey, both fled together—  
The third a dove of softest feather.  
While from the awful sight retreating  
The two first birds in haste were fleeing,  
This turtle-dove, so true and tender,  
Some service to her Lord would render.  
She o'er the cruel tree would hover,  
Those tortured limbs she fain would cover;  
She viewed the sacred blood fast flowing,  
Her heart with love and pity glowing;  
Coo, coo, coo, coo! is all she utters  
While o'er Him her soft pinion flutters;  
Coo, coo! in tones that sigh and languish,  
Coo, coo! for shame and bitter anguish.  
Since then her tones still echo sadness  
Though all around ring mirth and gladness."

"That is a beautiful legend," said Mrs. Ramsey; "I am so glad to have heard it."

"And you do not think it superstitious of me, as Hans says it is, to believe in such stories?"

"I think," replied Mrs. Ramsey, "that it is quite natural that you should do so, brought up as you have been, hearing them told by all around you from your birth. Only be careful to believe nothing unworthy of the kind Creator and Father who loves all His creatures, and who will not suffer evil spirits to have such power as some people are too ready to believe. And these stories, although untrue as matters of fact, often contain a lesson for us; thus, you say you do not believe the thieving servant girl was changed into a lapwing; neither do I; yet not the less true is it, that God hates sin and will punish it. And it may well be said that to leave storks' and swallows' nests undisturbed brings a blessing on the house where they build; for must not He, by whom not one sparrow is forgotten, love those who are kind to His harmless creatures?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Kirstin, delighted; "I never thought of that; I shall tell Hans what you say—thank you for telling me. But the story of the Turtle Dove, what ought I to think about that?"

"I can well imagine," said Mrs. Ramsey, "that this bit of rhyme originated with some devout mind ever brooding over the mystery of the Passion, and seeking sympathy in the plaintive sights and sounds of Nature. The note of the dove is indeed the saddest of birds'

notes, and might easily remind a thoughtful listener of the saddest event in the world's history. Just as in a warmer climate the old monks working in their gardens found one flower which seemed to them to unite images of the cross, the three nails, the five wounds, and the crown of thorns." Seeing Kirstin look puzzled, she exerted herself to explain to her the peculiar formation of the passion-flower, and with Mr. Ramsey's help at last succeeded, for the cloud cleared off the girl's forehead, and she exclaimed, "Oh, how much I should like to see that flower! and the pastor, too, how he would love it! do you think he has seen it?"

"I have no doubt he has seen it," replied Mr. Ramsey, "for it is not at all uncommon, only this northern part of Jutland is so bleak very few plants will thrive. But that reminds me, Esther, will you not come and see the good old man to-day? or are you tired?"

She replied she was not at all tired; and it was agreed that they would go to the pastor's forthwith, while Kirstin went home to see after little Alec. And having complete reliance upon her care and tenderness, three hours elapsed before the little boy's parents returned.

Mrs. Ramsey brought back pretty sketches to show to her darling. There was first the archway through which you entered the square court, surrounded with farm-buildings, a few lime-trees growing in the centre, and the parsonage house itself opposite the archway—the watch-dog chained near the entrance, the cocks and hens strutting about, &c. Then there was a picture of the other side of the low, one-storied house, looking out on the old-fashioned garden with its few hardy shrubs. Then a sketch of the humble church near the shore, with its simple bell, hanging without a tower. And, lastly, there were neatly-drawn fac-similes of some of the treasures in Mr. Nordenfelt's museum, ancient ornaments worn by the Vikings, or their daughters, curious relics, of which the worthy pastor had been a diligent collector all his life, his affectionate parishioners readily contributing to his store whenever it was in their power.

Alec had all these pictures explained to him, and meantime Mr. Ramsey approached Kirstin and told her that they had arranged to remove to the Parsonage, in order that he and his wife and Alec might be together again, and Alec sit in the sheltered garden and enjoy fresh air. But as they would want a nurse for the little boy would not she go with them?

Kirstin opened her eyes very wide, and Mr. Ramsey went on to explain that of course he would pay a girl to do Kirstin's work at home. She now understood; she blushed crimson, and looked on the ground. "Will you not come?" asked he, gently. "Oh, with so much pleasure!" she stammered in reply; then, shaking her head, she added, "Father will not have it."

And Kirstin was right. When the proposal was made to Michael Ericksen he gave a decided negative. "Why could not the gentleman engage a girl for a nurse, and leave his daughter alone—he wanted her himself." It was explained to him that the child was ill; that he was used to Kirstin and fond of her; and that his parents trusted Kirstin as they could not trust a stranger. Michael's answer was prompt: he, too, trusted his daughter, and could not trust a stranger; he would not have a girl from the village in his house. At this point in the negotiation Alec, who had great quickness of apprehension, suddenly discovering from some of his mother's phrases of mingled English and Danish that it was his fate that hung in the balance, set up a cry for Kirstin.

"I want Kirstin! I love Kirstin! it was she brought me out of the water; I will not go away from her. Come here, Kirstin!" But for the first time the girl did not obey his call. Her heart full to overflowing, she ran out of the house to indulge her tears, and not looking where she was going, stumbled against her brother, who was just returning from school. She confided her trouble to him; would he get their grandfather to intercede for her, for she really longed to go with the English people a little while, and nurse their child.

"I have told you already several times, Kirstin, they are not English people at all—they are Scotch. So Mr. Gröndal says, and I suppose you don't set up for knowing better."

"But Scotland is in England, I thought," persisted poor Kirstin.

"No such thing: they both together make up one island. You might as well call a Jutlander a Sleswiger: but it's of no use telling you things, you're so stupid."

"I know I am stupid," replied the humble-minded sister; "but, Hans, I should not be so stupid if I were more with them, they are so kind and so patient, and teach me so much. Oh, won't you speak to grandfather?"

"I'll see about it;" and Hans went in with an important step. "But

remember, Mr. Ramsey is a Scotchman—a merchant, Mr. Gröndal says, settled in Hamburg.”

The negotiations were concluded more favourably than Kirstin had hoped; but she remained in ignorance of her happy fate, for on re-entering the cottage she was sent to put the little boy to bed, and he, more clamorous than ever for his Kirstin, kept her singing to him long after. When, however, the child fell asleep, and she returned to the kitchen, and began making the usual preparations for supper, she found everything arranged satisfactorily.

The Ramseys were to remove to the Parsonage on the morrow, and as her father was going to sea, she was to be allowed to go with them and remain till the usual hour of the fisherman's return. He must have her, he said, in the evening and early morning, but during the next week, at least, she might, after finishing her morning's work, go to the Parsonage; the kind old grandfather undertook to serve up his own dinner and also his son's if at home. Hans could take his dinner at his master's, Kirstin, hers at the Parsonage. Whether these arrangements were effected by the diplomacy of Hans, his sister never knew, but she was not the less pleased and surprised, and quietly took her seat by Mrs. Ramsey while her father carried on a familiar chat with his guests.

“Is it true,” inquired Mr. Ramsey, “that the herrings have forsaken the Liimfjord?”

“Quite true,” was the reply; “it was the canal, the horrible canal the folk must needs make to join it, that poisoned the water to them, and drove them all away: they have never come there since. But they come to us in the Nissumfjord still: twice a year they come, in March and again in autumn, but then only a few, seeking shelter from larger fish who would devour them. In the spring the herring-fishery lasts four weeks.”

“Yes; you werè always famous for it in this country. Fancy, Esther, when it pleased the Danish king and his ministers to cast off allegiance to the Pope, and the people were informed to that effect, the general saying throughout the country, was, ‘It won't make the herrings dear!’ there's a phlegmatic nation for you!”

“Well, the lives of thousands depended on the herring fishery; nobody's life, I presume, depended on the Pope's good pleasure,” responded Michael, sententiously.

The removal of the Ramseys to the Parsonage took place on the following morning. This was another epoch in Kirstin's life, for the familiar intercourse that now began between her and the inmates of the Parsonage was very improving to her in many ways. She learned neater ways of doing household work from the pastor's maidens, and also became initiated into some of their culinary secrets. And the pastor himself, pleased to see his favourite daughter so frequently, made more particular inquiries about the progress of her education, and promised, when the Ramseys should leave, and she had again more leisure, to lend her books, and set her copies and sums himself. Time for lessons she certainly had not now: she had to rise earlier and went to rest later than ever before, but she was so happy! Her smile was so bright, her voice, when she sang the same old songs as before, seemed to have gained in strength and compass, and still more in feeling. The pastor said once, looking at her as she left the room on an errand given her by Mrs. Ramsey, "If the phrase were not almost a sacred one, I should say the child was transfigured."

One evening, Mrs. Ramsey having rambled farther than usual, felt tired, and on her way home entered Michael's cottage to rest herself. She found in the kitchen no one but the old grandfather, and passing through into Kirstin's little room, lay down on the bed, always so spotlessly clean. Perhaps she closed her eyes and slept half an hour, anyhow it came upon her quite as a surprise when she heard voices in angry altercation. One was familiar to her: it was Michael's; but the other was unknown, and the words being Danish she could scarcely catch their meaning. She could only hear Michael's oft-repeated, "No, no, not for him; never think of it, I will not have it so." At last she rose up hastily and entered the kitchen; Michael saw her and would fain have broken up the colloquy, but the other, whose back was to the door, went on with words which seemed extremely affronting to Michael. At this moment the outer door burst open, and Kirstin rushed in almost breathless with eagerness, her colour raised, and her eyes sparkling. "They told me you were here; oh! look dear lady, here is your ring—your emerald ring!" And taking hold of Mrs. Ramsey's hand, she placed the lost ring on her finger, repeating, "Oh, I am so glad—so glad!"

"My ring, Kirstin! how did you come by it?" said the owner, in amazement.

"I have bathed morning and evening in the fiord just where it fell, feeling about for it as long as my breath lasted. Oh yes, dear lady, did not I say if I had been the knight of old time, no hand but mine



should have recovered my lady's lost ring; and you are my lady, although poor Kirstin cannot be your knight, not even so much as your squire." And Kirstin pressed Mrs. Ramsey's hand to her lips in a fit of rapture.



"You are a dear girl," said the latter; "but you shall not do that," and for the first time she kissed Kirstin's cheek.

The sight of the young girl's innocent, child-like joy had an instantaneous effect upon the two angry men. The quarrel ceased, and the stranger, whom Mrs. Ramsey recognised as the elder Petersen, a good seaman, but often the worse for drink, muttered a few more words to himself as he looked at her, and, his head bent down, his look askance, left the house. Michael's stern, set face softened as he watched his daughter's interview with the lady, but he spoke no more than a civil good-night, and that rather coldly.

When Mrs. Ramsey was gone, he addressed his daughter abruptly. "Tell me, Kirstin, has Niels Petersen met you often lately when you have been coming home from the Parsonage?"

"Twice, father, I think; not oftener."

"Remember then, if it chance so again, that you do not speak to him."

"I do not want to speak to him, father; he is a bad man, and I don't like him."

## CHAPTER VI.

### MORTEN AND THE MAN FROM MOEN.

A FEW days later, Michael Ericksen astonished the world by presenting himself early one morning at the Parsonage, and requesting an interview with Mr. Ramsey. As usual, his words were few, his manner unceremonious. He had given leave for his daughter to assist in nursing the little sick boy during one week; that time had been protracted to three weeks; the child was now better, and could, he supposed, dispense with her services; in any case, he wanted Kirstin at home again, and at home she must stay: he did not intend her to go to service, and so much gadding to and fro was unfit for girls. Mr. Ramsey heard him out to the end of this speech; but when Michael, having delivered it, turned on his heel to go, as having settled the matter, he politely begged the fisherman to spare him a few minutes, and made his speech in return. True, Alec was better, much better; that was owing to Kirstin's tender care, without which the confinement of constant attendance upon him would have been very trying to his wife. Their obligations to himself and his daughter were such as could not be repaid; but would not Michael accept of some small acknowledgment such as might serve to increase Kirstin's portion? No;

Michael shook his head : he did not keep an inn ; he could not have refused to receive the poor little wounded boy and his mother, but he had no mind to take in all waifs and strays that the sea might cast ashore, and paid he would not be, and he had always said that his daughter should not serve for hire. Michael's manner was so ungracious as almost to nullify the favourable impression that might have been made by his sturdy independence and disinterestedness. Fortunately, Mrs. Ramsey chanced to enter at this point in the discussion : her beaming smile and sweet voice seldom failed to soften the fisherman's rugged nature ; and when her husband had explained their conversation to her, she entreated so prettily in her broken Danish that Kirstin might at least be allowed to accompany them in an excursion they proposed to make before leaving the pastor's house, that Michael did not gainsay her. Perhaps he might have had another motive for not objecting to any plan that would simply take her altogether away for a week, but he did not say so. Finally the matter was thus arranged : Kirstin was to stay at home until the Ramseys had made their plan, and would themselves then fetch the girl, and keep her with them until the party returned from their excursion.

A consultation with the pastor followed : the route had to be marked out and arranged so as to embrace most points of interest, yet not occasion fatigue to Alec and his mother. Mr. Nordenfelt undertook to procure one of the neighbour's carriages for them ; but this would have to be sent back the next day, and then with their ignorance of the country how were they to proceed farther ? Their best plan was plainly to hire a guide who could be trusted to make arrangements for them ; and then the idea was suggested that Morten Ranildsen would be the very person to take such an office if he could be induced to do so. Accordingly a messenger was despatched, and the young fisherman came to the Parsonage to see what was wanted of him. Would he go with Mr. Ramsey's party on an excursion for a few days, receiving a handsome remuneration for his services ? "Most gladly," was his answer ; and he traced out a route which they could either lengthen or shorten if found too fatiguing, for the journey was partly an experiment to try whether the child were really fit to be transported to Copenhagen.

It was a fine bright morning when they started, and the carriage, low built, but roomy, proved a comfortable conveyance. Morten sat

beside the driver, his flageolet in his hand : apparently he considered his pay too good to be earned merely by his services as guide, and that he was bound to be musician also, and general factotum. Never had his well-featured face looked brighter or pleasanter. Mrs. Ramsey would have admired him more than ever, only during the last month she had gradually transferred her affections to Kirstin. Little Aleo was made comfortable with cushions, and the fresh air lent his pale cheeks a bloom they had not worn since he was wafted on the Jutland coast. As for his mother, she enjoyed everything—the sight of her darling's improved health, the summer air, the yellow flowers starring the purple heath, over which the carriage wheels bore them easily. "Oh! what scent is that?" she exclaimed; "it is not wild thyme, but stronger." Morten bade the driver stop, and springing down presented her with some tufts of the sweet gale, crushed into giving out stronger fragrance.

"We call it *Porse*," he said, "and use it to flavour our ale."

"It is put to the same use in Germany," remarked Mr. Ramsey.

"These have a strong perfume too," added Morten, gathering some tall cream-coloured orchises.

"Yes, but I don't like the scent," replied the lady; "get me some of those yellow flowers."

In a few minutes he brought her a bouquet of yellow iris, blue veronica, potentilla, and other flowers.

"What do you call this?" asked she, pointing to the thrift in her bouquet.

"*Krigskarl*, i.e., warrior," he replied; "but up in *Vendsyssel* they call it '*Daily bread*.'"

"And this," pointing to the speedwell.

"*Crenpriis*, i.e., Prize of honour."

"That is a pretty name for a pretty plant; but what is your name for this, which we call *Sundew*, because the dew rests upon it after the sun has risen?"

"We call it *Our Lady's tears*, and this one, *Baldur's brow*."

"I like these names," said Mrs. Ramsey; "I should soon learn your language if I stayed here much longer."

"Oh, dear lady," sighed Kirstin, her bright face overcast, "must you indeed go away soon?"

"Indeed I must; for my poor husband will have to go back to his close counting-house. We have spent more than six weeks of our

holidays; however, we hope to have a fortnight at Copenhagen before returning to Hamburg."

"And you will not be here at harvest-time?"

"Do you go to harvest-homes, Kirstin?"

"I went once; it was last year, father was so kind as to take me, although he does not care for such things. Shall I tell you about it?"

"Yes; I should like to know how the people amused themselves."

"Oh, there was 'storre gambill'—great gambols. It is always at the end of July: there were so many people, for you know Germans come to help get the crops in. One man sat in a corner of the large barn playing the fiddle, and the rest of us danced. The figures were difficult: I could not do them well because I had never danced before. And the shoes made such a clatter, and one man sang a ballad, and at the end of each verse some jumped up so high; and then we all joined hands and sang together."

"What was the ballad about?"

"It was a sad one: I can sing it if you like;" and Kirstin sung, Morten's deep voice chiming in at the refrain:—

"A noble knight dwelt near the fiord,  
Many a vassal called him lord;  
Six children feasted at his board—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"His three bold, bonny boys so gay  
By robbers they are ta'en away;  
Three maids are left him bright as day—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"My maidens wake, ye sleep too long;  
'Tis Sunday morning—sweet and strong  
In church will rise the holy song—'  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"They have donned their Sunday raiment fair;  
The mother plaited well their hair;  
And on to Horbelof church they fare—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"Three maiden flow'rets fair as good;  
But as they pass through Tostruppe wood,  
Three savage dogs beside them stood—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"Three robbers threat'ning raise their knives;  
'Now will you bide with us as wives?  
Or will ye forfeit your young lives?'  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"I will not be a robber's wife,  
I'd rather forfeit my young life!  
Then mid the robbers rose a strife—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"O brothers, shed not their young blood!  
No flowers so fair in all the wood!  
Vainly the youngest thus withstood—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"For stronger were the elder twain;  
The maidens in their youth are slain;  
The grass is dyed with crimson stain—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"The robbers to the tower that night  
Are come, where courteous doth invite  
His guests to sup with him, the knight—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"Your ladye shows us great disdain,  
Sit down with us she will not deign;  
Noble as hers is yet our strain!—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"Then Ladye Mettelil spake low,—  
'I'll not sit down until I know  
What things within these sacks ye stow'—  
Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!

"She looked, she saw, she guessed it all;  
 'Let none fly living from this hall!  
 Rise up, be quick, hold them in thrall!—  
     Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!"

"Twas thus the eldest robber spake,—  
 'Vainly should we resistance make;  
 But hear us for Our Lady's sake!—  
     Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!"

"Sons of a knight, to school went we;  
 When robbers from the forest free  
 Took us in harsh captivitie'—  
     Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!"

"Two heads before the axe bend low;  
 The youngest, a sad pilgrim, slow  
 To Palestine forthwith must go—  
     Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!"

"Then loud the knight and ladye cry,—  
 'Oh sons! oh speechless misery!  
 Ye've slain your sisters, ye must die!  
     Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!"

"'Are these our sisters we have slain?  
 Then 'neath the axe must bend we twain;  
 But this your youngest take again,'—  
     Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!"

"'His hand shared not our sinful deed;  
 To Holy Land, dear brother, speed,  
 And pray for us in our sore need!—  
     Woe's me for Ladye Mettelil!"

"Why, what a pity Geordie is not here!" exclaimed Mr. Ramsey;  
 "here is a ballad, the outline of the story whereof is similar to our old  
 Scottish one of the Bonnie Banks o' Fordie: even some of the expressions  
 are identical; how delighted he would be! I wonder if the story  
 be really true, and have travelled from Scotland to Denmark, or *vice*  
*versâ*."

"It is a terribly tragical history anyhow," said his wife; "I should  
 not fancy dancing to it."

"They usually choose tragical stories for the dances," said Morten,  
 "I don't know why. But I never heard that song at all before Kirstin  
 took to singing it."

"It is not one of our Jutland songs, I know; the man who sang it at  
 the harvest-home came from Moen, they said."

"And you have remembered it all after hearing it only once: you  
 have a good memory," observed Mr. Ramsey.

Kirstin blushed a little. "I never was at a harvest-home but that  
 once, and I could not help thinking about it a good deal afterwards; and  
 then the story was so sad, the words used to come in my head, and I  
 could not keep from singing them."

(To be continued.)

frightened; strike quickly, and you will get dumplings enough for both yourself and your wife to live on."

"How some people can invent!" said the young man; and so, since he could not be a poet himself, he abused all the rest who were poets.


This we have from the wise woman. She knows what can be invented.

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## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### TREASURE LOST.



ELL, Angus, said Mrs. Ramsey, as she stood with her husband and Morten on the Himmelsbjerg, "you must allow that this is pretty, after all." Beneath them lay miniature lakes strung upon the placid river, the Guden, like birds' eggs on a thread; around spread the hills, one crowned with dark pines, another plumed with feathery beech, a third wearing a patchwork garment of squares of clover, red and yellow. Beyond them stretched the purple moorland. "And how pleasant are the sounds," continued she, "that come up to us through the stillness! Morten, what birds are those that seem to be answering each other out of the juniper bushes?"

"They are heath-larks, and you may hear also the wild duck's scream, and the water hen's 'cluck, cluck!' down below."

"Ah! and what is more musical—the stroke of the fishermen's oars on the lake, and their voices: what are they singing?"

"Their evening hymn," said Morten. "There are salmon in the lake, and pike, and other fish besides. Once, too, there were wolves in these parts, and wild boars; folk used to dig pits for them."

"We must make haste back," said Mr. Ramsey; "do you not hear the bells?" And as he spoke, from a dozen churches beneath, the sunset bells began to chime. Anxious to reach an inn before evening on little Alec's account, the three made their way through the wood-wilderness that covers the sides of the Himmelsbjerg as quickly as they could. They found the child in an ecstasy of delight at what he had heard and seen during their absence. Kirstin had pointed out to him a whole family of fox-cubs, sitting on the heath at play together

only a little way off from him, and he had sat so still, not to frighten them away. Little dormice he had also seen, scampering from under the bracken; and a great eagle had hovered in the air high above him; and he had seen black storks in their nest in the tree; so shy and wild the black storks were, they would not build on the tops of houses like their white-feathered cousins. And Kirstin had gathered for him a bouquet of wild flowers; and a gipsy woman, so tall, with such fierce black eyes, had passed by, dressed in a red gown; and he had felt quite frightened because she looked at him, only Kirstin was there, and he knew Kirstin would never let him be carried away. So the time had not seemed long, though the carriage had been left standing two hours.

In fact, Alec did not suffer from the fatigue of the journey; it rather seemed to strengthen him, and certainly he enjoyed it. Mrs. Ramsey enjoyed herself too, and so did Kirstin, and Mr. Ramsey was very glad of Morten's assistance and advice. But the young man himself, after the first day, felt disappointed. He had little satisfaction in his old playmate's society, for she seemed to get more and more wrapped up in Mrs. Ramsey and the child, and to have eyes and ears for no one else. Kirstin was indeed very full of the idea that she must soon lose those she loved so dearly, and was, in consequence, anxious to miss no opportunity of rendering them any service, ever so trifling, and of testifying her affection in every possible way. The child had become very much attached to her, and his mother was revolving in her mind a plan, the advantages of which should reconcile the fisherman to parting with his daughter, and thus retaining her services for Alec's benefit.

It was on the evening of the fourth day after they had started on their excursion that Kirstin was, as agreed beforehand, left at her father's door, the carriage then proceeding straight to the Parsonage, for it was late, and Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey proposed paying Michael Ericksen a visit early the following morning. They came accordingly, and found Kirstin engaged in her housework; but her eyes were red and swollen, and on seeing them she started and fled to her own room. No one was there to receive them but the old grandfather, and between him and Mrs. Ramsey communication was impossible: her husband, with some trouble, elicited the information that the fisherman would soon be in, and sat down on one of the wooden settles to await Michael's return, while Esther went in pursuit of Kirstin. The poor girl was found

kneeling beside her bed in an agony of tears, and Mrs. Ramsey coming close behind her, spent some time soothing her with her soft voice and caresses before she was able to compose herself and give an account of her trouble.

Kirstin had to begin her history with the night on which she had brought poor old Signete from the churchyard and let her sleep in her father's cottage, contrary to his wish. It appeared that during her late absence from home, Signete had again been in the neighbourhood, and had, it was reported, been seen prowling about their cottage, the spade in her hand with which she was wont, with all the little strength her poor nerveless arms retained, to turn over the earth in the churchyards. Michael, on hearing this, had dug in the spot where he had secreted an earthen pot filled with his savings. The pot and its contents were gone. Kirstin, on her arrival home the night before, had been received with a violent storm of anger on her father's part, and with scarcely less vehement reproaches from her brother, both of them considering she was the cause of their misfortune, in having brought Signete to the house six weeks ago. "Oh, it is dreadful!" sighed the innocent girl; "father says he cannot now send Hans to school and the university. Hans says his chance for life is gone, and all through my fault." And she could not restrain herself; she began weeping again, though less violently than before, her head laid upon Mrs. Ramsey's shoulder.

Esther let her alone a few minutes, only clasping her closely, and then said, "But, Kirstin, are you sure that it is Signete who has taken the money?"

"Indeed I do not believe she has taken it," replied poor Kirstin; "what good could money do her? and it never was heard that she took the least thing from the different houses where she has been sheltered: nobody ever thought of suspecting her before—only Hans took a dislike to her, and father never liked anybody to be in his house: but I did not think it was because of his savings."

"Do you know of any one else who was likely to rob your father?" asked Mrs. Ramsey.

"No." Kirstin could not think who could have done it; after a little while, however, she in some measure regained her composure and returned with her kind friend to the kitchen. They found Mr. Ramsey and Michael in earnest conversation.



"It is not only," the latter was saying, "on account of my son's education that I regret this loss; the little portion I had reserved for my daughter is gone too."

"Oh, father, do not think of that!" exclaimed the girl, springing to her father's side, and venturing, though timidly, to lay her hand on his shoulder. He did not shake it off, though he appeared not to notice her, and Kirstin felt that his anger was softening.

Mrs. Ramsey went up to her husband and whispered in his ear. "It is just what I am going to speak about," he said. "I have little doubt but that your lost treasure will be found; but that is no reason why I should not make the proposal I had planned before I heard of your misfortune. I have had some little talk both with the schoolmaster and your son; I can see for myself that he has great quickness of apprehension and powers of application, and Mr. Gröndel gives him an excellent character: he tells me Hans is quite fit for a higher class school. I will, if you approve, undertake to defray his school expenses at Copenhagen for the next three years, and after that time consider what will be most for his advantage. Of course his future calling will be determined by his own exertions and the peculiar bent of his talents."

Michael had slowly raised his eyes to the speaker's face; and seemed to have some difficulty in taking in his meaning. Mr. Ramsey repeated his offer in nearly the same words, and Kirstin was looking beseechingly at her father when he got up from his seat, and with his usual bluntness began saying, "I do not know how to thank you, Mr. Ramsey."

"Then," interrupted the merchant with a smile, "do not thank me at all, and do not answer me at once. Only do me the favour to talk the matter over with your son. As I said before, there is no knowing what he may take a fancy for by-and-by: he may prefer being a clerk in my office with a fair salary to the uncertain success of a learned profession. And remember any how, that we owe to the exertions of you and your family and friends our very lives, so that in any case we must still be your debtors. Moreover, my wife will not be satisfied unless I make one more effort to rob you of your daughter."

He then explained in detail his wife's wish to take Kirstin back with her to Hamburg in the capacity of Alec's nurse, promising that she should not only receive good wages, but have leisure and oppor-

tunity to learn German, and English too, if she pleased, and receive instruction sufficient to enable her afterwards to earn her livelihood as a governess.

But if Mr. Ramsey expected to be supported by Kirstin herself in this proposal, he was disappointed, for the girl ran up to his wife and cried out, "Oh, thanks, dear lady, thanks! but it cannot be; indeed I must stay with father, unless he sends me away. Only send Hans to school, dear Hans, that he may not say I have ruined him!" And again her eyes rained tears.

The merchant now rose from his seat and said, "Esther, we have left Alec to the pastor long enough: you must return to him, and I will make arrangements for our departure."

"We will come and see you in the evening, Kirstin, when your brother is at home," added his wife, with a bright smile, as they both left the cottage. On their way back to the Parsonage, Mrs. Ramsey reminded her husband of the little scene she had witnessed scarcely a week ago when Michael and the elder Petersen were in such angry converse. "I did not understand what he said," observed she, "but his look and manner were very like vowing vengeance when he left the cottage. Could he have taken the money and then contrived to throw the blame on that poor lunatic?"

The suggestion was thought worth consideration, and they consulted the pastor on the subject. But Mr. Nordenfelt did not take this view of the matter. Old Kunz Petersen was so often quarrelsome after he had been drinking, no one ever attached importance to words of his when in that condition, nor had he ever been accused of dishonesty. Neither did he believe poor Signete was the culprit: she had not sense enough to feel the want of money; but there was a general report of Michael's wealth, the amount of which he imagined had been greatly exaggerated, and some gipsies or other wandering folk might have made an incursion upon the premises while the fisherman was at sea, Hans at school, and Kirstin absent with the Ramseys. Old Magnus was so dreamy, and absorbed in his work, that his presence at home was no safeguard.

As to Kirstin, Mr. Nordenfelt thought Michael was too wise a father to reject proposals so much for her advantage, especially now there was no treasure to be guarded during his frequent absences from home; and these calculations proved correct. At the next interview with the

fisherman, Michael thanked Mr. Ramsey with real warmth, and said Hans for his part accepted the kindness offered with transport: Kirstin, too, he was quite willing to part with on such advantageous terms. He had had other plans for her, he observed, but the loss of her portion made all the difference in the world. Mr. Ramsey inquired if he had any engagement in view for her, but he responded abruptly, "No matter if I had: now he will think of the nest, not of the bird." And with this proverb he broke off the conference, his stern lips and set features showing he did not choose to open himself further.

There was something pathetic in the man's having been brought so low as to unlock his thoughts at all; and with real pity for his depression, and respect for his anxious regard for his children's benefit, Mrs. Ramsey turned to Kirstin, who was sitting dejectedly at her spinning-wheel, and had heard all that her father had said without looking up. "Come with me, Kirstin; let us take a turn on the sea shore," said the kind lady; "we must talk over this matter." The girl rose up immediately and followed her out of the cottage.

"Shall I leave you alone with Mrs. Ramsey, Kirstin?" inquired the merchant; "I can go and talk to your brother while you have your say out."

"Oh no, I had rather you heard what I have to say," replied the girl; and with that frankness which was her especial charm in Mr. Ramsey's eyes, she took one of his hands as well as one of his wife's, and pressing both with warmth, walked on between them.

Mrs. Ramsey saw she was too agitated to speak, and began the subject, saying, "Suppose you listen to me first, Kirstin;" and then she entered into full details of her plan for Kirstin's education, and of the useful life she would lead as Alec's nurse, or, rather, attendant. The anxiety of her father about her future was then adverted to, and his fear that she would feel lonely and unprotected in that remote cottage on the fiord when her brother was at school, and her father at sea. To the first part of this speech Kirstin listened with downcast eyes and throbbing heart, for she was not insensible to the pleasant as well as profitable nature of the prospects opened and offered to her. She was not altogether free from the ambition with which her brother Hans was so deeply imbued. But the idea of her wanting protection, and suffering from loneliness she would not entertain for a moment, and the colour came back to her face, and the light to her eyes, as she answered this part of Mrs. Ramsey's speech.

Had she not herself been protector to Hans?—a delicate feeble child—he had never shielded her. Of course she would miss him when he was gone; but oh, she was so glad, so thankful for him to go! “But dear, dear lady,” she said, “this is why I cannot go with you—God bless you for loving a poor girl like me!—but it must not be. I was only a little thing eight years old like Karen, when my mother died, and she lay in the bed with her arms round my neck, and her pale face close to mine, and she blessed me and said, I had been a good little daughter to her, and must now be a good daughter to father, whom she was leaving, and never forsake him. He was a stern man sometimes, and it would not always be easy to please him; but he really loved me, she said, and I must be good, and brave, and faithful to him. And I said I would be so always—and now you see, lady, I cannot leave him.”

“But if he wishes you to go, Kirstin?”

“Oh no, that cannot be; he may think he wishes it for my good; but just because it is for my good, and would be so very pleasant, I must not go. Oh no, dear lady! you do not really think he does not love me, and wants to get rid of me?”

And the expression of pain in her eyes as she looked up into Mr. Ramsey's face was such that the latter hastened to reply, “He could not possibly want to get rid of you, Kirstin, except, of course, for your good.”

“Then I cannot go with you, dear lady, and you must not ask me again; I promised mother that I would always do as much as I could for father and Hans, and how could that be if I left father? He might be ill and die, perhaps with only a stranger to close his eyes; and how then could he tell mother I had kept my word, and been true? Only, dear lady, don't think poor Kirstin ungrateful!”—and she kissed the hands she held—“and tell me I am right.”

Her friends assured her she was quite right, and Mr. Ramsey said, “We will not say a word more to persuade you, Kirstin;” but his wife could not restrain herself from the remark, “Your father intended you to be married, and then you must have left him.” The young girl looked up innocently and replied, “He would not have thought of that for two or three years to come: I am too young. Besides if married, I should be near him, not with the sea between us. And now he says I need not think of it, no one will want me; so I am sure of staying with him.”

"And suppose, Kirstin, he should be drowned at sea, as are so many fishermen on this coast?"

"Then, perhaps," she replied, quite coolly, for the event was too common not to be often in men's minds, "Hans will want me to live with him, or I can go to service. And," she went on, "when you talk of my being so lonely, you forget kind old grandfather: he and I love each other dearly, and are happy together all day when father is at sea." She had talked herself back into a cheerful mood; but her courage was tried sorely when she heard from Mr. Ramsey that they must leave the Parsonage in two days to be in time for a steamboat that would take them from Aarhus to Copenhagen. "Must it really be so soon?"

"And Hans is to join us before we leave Copenhagen," added Mrs. Ramsey. "And Mr. Greendale says he is sure you, Kirstin, will get his clothes ready in a few days."

"I must work hard then," said Kirstin. It was fortunate for her she had responsibilities on her brother's account to occupy her time and thoughts during the next few days. As it was, in spite of her constant occupation, she could not forget the coming separation from her friends, and no longer sang over her work as she had been wont to do. The day after her conversation with the Ramseys, feeling the air of the cottage oppressive as she sat spinning, she took her wheel out of doors. She had drooped her head over it, and though she heard the tread of footsteps approaching, did not look up till some one stood beside her. It was Morten. Omitting the usual salutations, he began abruptly, "Is it true, Kirstin, that Hans is going to Copenhagen in a fortnight's time, and that Mr. Ramsey is going to place him at school there?" She nodded her head in token of assent.

"And is it true, also, that you have refused to go to Hamburg with Mrs. Ramsey, although your father would give you leave?"

Again she nodded her head, and went on with her spinning. "It will be very lonely for you when they are gone."

"Please don't talk about it, Morten," she said; "leave me alone."

"Oh, Kirstin, that is unkind! when I am going away to-morrow, and you will not see me for two years."

She now lifted her eyes to his face. "I did not know that," she said; "where are you going?"

"To Skagen to-morrow, and thence I am going to Norway."

"And Karen?"

"That is what I wanted to speak to you about. You see I could not be happy, leaving her with old Else; besides, it will be a good thing for me to let Hendrick Bryde have my house while I am away. I was telling your father of my difficulty, and he said it would be dull for you when Hans was gone; and that if you liked he would not mind taking Karen in for the two years: she would not be in the way, and might learn to help you a little. And then Bryde would pay his rent to your father and that would cover Karen's expenses."

"Oh, Morten, of course I shall like that; how kind of father!"

Morten looked as though he did not equally appreciate the kindness. "Then you will have her, Kirstin, and you have not really forgotten old friends for new ones?"

Kirstin flushed up at this. "You told me just now, Morten, that I was unkind, and now I think you are unkind. I cannot help loving Mrs. Ramsey, and being sorry"—here her voice broke down, and she bent over her wheel to hide her face.

Morten was silent a few minutes; then he said with real compunction in his looks and tone, "Please forgive me, Kirstin, and be friends with me again, for I must say farewell to you to-night. I shall start after daybreak to-morrow."

Kirstin stopped her wheel, and put out her hand. "Good-bye, Morten; indeed I will take care of little Karen."

"I know you will, Kirstin; but sometimes I think she will hardly live to grow up. She is all I have in the world. Thanks for all kindness, Kirstin. God be with you!" He wrung her hand, and turned away very quickly.

Kirstin looked after him, wondering. "He used not to think so badly of Karen," she said to herself; "can there be really anything the matter with her? But how kind it was of father to think of my being so lonely; it will be a great comfort to have the child when they are all gone."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### YULE-TIDE STORIES.

ALL gone! Little Alec, his parents, Hans, Morten, though this last, as he felt, formed but an unimportant item compared with the others. It was a change indeed for Kirstin: lately her life had been so full of

interest, now she was reduced to the society of her father, grandfather, and the child Karen. She had had so much intercourse with the Ramseys, they had opened and enlarged her mind, had brought, as it were, a fresh breeze from the outer world to stir up the placid waters of her daily existence. Hans, too, had given her thoughts out of books, and ideas derived from his master—had shared with her his hopes and aspirations: he, too, was no longer by her side. There was nothing now to look forward to at the end of the day, the evening was more humdrum than the morning, for her father and grandfather seldom spoke, and Karen's childish prattle no longer interested her. It was dreary enough, and for a time the active-spirited girl drooped, and felt listless and weary. But she had inherited something of her father's energy and independence, and was certain not long to feel her life dull and profitless. One afternoon as she sat over her wheel, her mind busily recalling all that had passed during the visit of the Ramseys to her native shore, lingering over every detail with a sort of yearning regret, this thought flashed upon her. "It was our Lord sent them here to be our friends and do good to me, a poor girl; now they are gone away to do good somewhere else, to be kind to others as they were to me; they helped me, taught me, for a little while; now our Lord will have me teach myself: oh yes, that is it; I must not be idle; I used to learn lessons for Hans before they came, while I spun and knitted, now I do nothing but think of them; that is not good—it is idle. The pastor, he would set me lessons now; he said he would lend me books, and did not he tell me when I was confirmed that I was always to go to him when I wanted help? Certainly he has not been to see us for a long time; no matter, it is I who want him, not he who wants me. I will go at once." She called Karen, who was looking for shells on the shore, and asked her if she would not like a walk; the little girl was quite ready, and the two went together to the Parsonage.

Mr. Nordenfelt was pleased at their visit, and the pretty little blue-eyed maiden being a favourite of his, hardly less than Kirstin, he bade his servant supply her with some sweetmeats, a store of which had been laid in during Alec Ramsey's stay, while he made Kirstin sit down beside him and began talking to her. "I intended coming to you to-morrow, my child," said he, "for to-day I received a letter from the good lady you loved so much, and she sends a message to you."

Kirstin's face flushed eagerly as the pastor took out of his pocket the

letter, crumpled up, and it must be owned grievously stained with anuff, so that it was wonderful how the beautifully clear flowing caligraphy could still be decyphered. He read this extract: "My love to dear Kirstin, and tell her I never forget her night and morning in my prayers, neither does Alec. And tell her I hope she takes pains with her writing, and will soon be able to write me a letter, which I shall have much pleasure in answering."

"Oh, she is indeed good to me!" exclaimed Kirstin, the large tear-drops forcing their way from her eyes; and then she told the pastor freely how she had suffered from weariness and depression—how blank and dull everything seemed. "I know it has been my own fault," she went on; "I have just done my work because I was obliged to do it, and have not cared to teach myself anything. But oh! I want to be helped to be good."

"That is what we all want, dear child," replied the old man; "but our Lord is always with us to help us when we ask Him, and in a far less degree we can help each other. In some little things I hope I may be able to help you: suppose we begin with what you want now, this writing? for you will be very much vexed not to be able to answer your brother's letters when they come; besides, you see Mrs. Ramsey expects you to write to her. No time like the present; let us begin at once." And he gave Kirstin a writing lesson on the spot; and when she said she must go home, for it was nearly time for her to meet her father at the shore, he set her some copies to take home, and gave her a book he thought she could understand. "You were a good child," he said, "to come here: come again when you can; remember your pastor's limbs are getting stiffish, and he cannot go about among his people as he would wish—you must come to him. And one word more: have you made acquaintance yet with your new neighbours, Hendrick Bryde and his wife?"

"I have only just spoken to them. Father never seemed to like my making friends with the neighbours, and I did not care about it."

"My child, they are decent folk; your father cannot object to them, and you must have some one to speak to. And Bodel Bryde is young and will like to know you: she is not like Mrs. Ramsey, but she will do you no harm, and you may do her good—do not let yourself be thought proud, Kirstin."

The girl opened her eyes wide at the idea. But she went away not



only comforted, but inspirited. On the shore she met the young woman just recommended to her acquaintance. She and her husband were new comers, having hired Morten Ranildsen's house. Hendrick Bryde was a good-natured, easy-tempered fellow: he was this evening in the same boat as Kirstin's father, and his wife was out on the usual errand, watching for the boat's return. She was fond of a chat, and on finding Kirstin more ready than usual to be sociable, confided to her the difficulty she felt in leaving her baby unguarded, while she went to the shore to meet her husband. Kirstin promised that Karen should go in and mind the child next time, and Bodel Bryde was encouraged to further confidences. It seemed another baby was expected soon: Kirstin knew little of babies, but the pastor having impressed upon her the duty of neighbourliness, she listened, and offered to help in any needful preparations.

She had plenty of leisure to help her new neighbour, for little Karen gave no trouble, and was, in fact, an assistance to her, being as handy and careful a little maiden as ever lived. In due course of time arrived Hans' first letter from Copenhagen, and very pleased and proud were both father and sister to receive it. He spoke with enthusiasm of the kindness with which he had been received on his arrival by Mr. Ramsey, who took him to his own rooms in a grand hotel for that first night, and offered to show him some of the sights of the capital next day, before depositing him in the hands of his future master. Hans had chosen to see the Round Tower, the famous Observatory built by Christian IV. for Tycho Brahe, the astronomer, and seemed especially delighted with the long spiral slope that leads up to the summit instead of stairs. "Only think, Kirstin," the boy wrote, "it is so smooth and even, that Czar Peter from Russia rode up it on horseback, and his Empress was driven up in a four-horse carriage. And when the Czar stood on the top of the tower he bade one of his servants spring from it, and the poor man would have obeyed him, if the Danish king had not interfered. 'Would your people be so obedient?' asked the Czar. 'I would never give such a command,' replied King Christian; 'but I know that I might lay my head down to sleep securely in the lap of the poorest and lowest of my subjects.'" Hans then went on to speak of his school and his master, and promised to write on every holiday.

Kirstin practised her writing diligently, and soon found herself

competent to answer her brother's letters, also she had to help Karen in her school-lessons, and that was useful to herself. After a time she achieved a letter to Mrs. Ramsey, and received in return one from Hamburg so kind, so pleasant! it was stored up in the chest as Kirstin's most precious treasure. And through the determination to improve herself as much as possible, her hours no longer wore away heavily. She went about her work zealously, anxious to do her best, but glad to get through it quickly, that she might have leisure for her studies. Whatever might be the weather, she contrived to get once a week to the Parsonage, and Mr. Nordenfelt had always help and counsel at her service; and, thanks to the pleasure his lessons and books gave her, she could look forward to the long dreary winter now setting in with courage and confidence.


A long severe winter it proved, and would have been very dreary had Kirstin not exerted herself to the utmost. Day after day fell the snow around their cottage, making roads and paths well-nigh impassable, blocking up the windows, tossing and whirling into their dwelling every time the door was opened. Karen could not go to school; Kirstin had to give her lessons as well as she could; her father sat at home day after day; and, weary of inaction, weary even of his beloved pipe, he grew fidgetty and hard to please. Kirstin's own studies had now to be given up, for though Karen was always at hand, the fragile little maiden could no longer be a help: she drooped during the winter months; her limbs had become stiff, and she seemed to drag them across the floor when she got up to perform the little services that she had rendered during the summer with such nimble feet, such a springy step. Sometimes, when she was amused or pleased, a bright light would come back into her blue eyes, and a brilliant vermilion flushed her cheeks; but ordinarily she was languid and took less and less interest in all that was going on around her. She coughed too, and that cough of hers worried Kirstin: could it be that Morten was right, and that Karen would die ere she reached her prime?



## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER VIII.—*continued.*

#### YULE-TIDE STORIES.

 HIS new-born anxiety made the little one more and more dear : more than ever she taxed herself to satisfy every wish the child could form, and to amuse her as much as lay in her power. She now reaped the advantage of having established friendly intercourse with her new neighbours, her only neighbours now, for the Petersens had left the place suddenly in the autumn, and were gone no one knew where. Bodil Bryde had duly welcomed her second infant a few weeks before Christmas; and now in spite of wind and weather insisted on coming to them on the festival-day to say, "God bless your Yule! May it last till Easter!" according to established Jutland greetings. Kirstin had in the worst of weather made her way to the Brydes' cottage in order to give all the help in her power; and now the cordial, good-tempered young couple were bent upon enjoying their Christmas roast goose in her society. But for them this Christmas would have been very dull in Michael Ericksen's home. Hans was at school, for the expense of his journey from Copenhagen was not to be thought of, little Karen an invalid, Morten absent, the fisherman abstracted and depressed: of the few animals that had once belonged to him only one cow remained; and Christmas in Jutland belief is the festival for brutes as well as men. Did not ox and ass share the chamber where our blessed Lord was born? and must they not have shared in the Virgin Mother's joy? and do not to this day the peasants believe that the cattle rise up and stand straight in their stalls as the clock strikes twelve on Christmas Eve? must they not be fed with the best of good hay, corn, and beans? Not for the world would Kirstin have forgotten to provide her old friend, the cow, with a double allowance of fodder, or have omitted to hang on a pole outside the cottage a small wheat-sheaf for the birds, that the poor little half-starved songsters might likewise enjoy the Yule banquet.

When the table was prepared for supper, and they all sat round it, Michael Ericksen's spirits seemed to revive: he bade his guests heartily

welcome to the best he had, and their cheerfulness infected him. As usual among Jutlanders, the party soon began telling old stories. Hendrick Bryde was talking of the hill-folk or Trolds, the little men and women living underground in houses of gold or crystal, who on Midsummer-eve and other festivals under their hills, then raised on red pillars, are seen by passers-by dancing, and drinking out of golden cups. Kirstin said she did not believe the legend that when the rebellious angels were cast down from heaven, some fell on the hills, and became hill-folk, others on the moors and were called elves, and others again into the farm-yards and were known as nisses. The pastor had told her that was not true: she was not to believe anything about angels that she did not read in the Bible.

"Ah! your pastor is a wise man," said the young fisherman, "but it will be a long time before he'll get us to disbelieve all our fathers have told us, and that some of us have seen with our own eyes. Why I was passing Vosborg the other day, and says the man I had just sold my fish to, 'Look at those three hills: in one of them dwells a hill-man who is a smith and has his workshop there; often one can see the flame rise right out of the hill-top at night. And if you want any smith's work mended, you have only to leave the thing, together with a silver penny, on the hill, and say what you want, then come again next morning, and lo! the silver penny is gone and your work is done for you, and that by no journeyman's hand.'"

"Well, mind you try your underground smith next time your kettle wants mending," said Kirstin, laughing.

"Indeed, but he shall do no such thing," cried his wife. "I would never cook food for a Christian in a thing those dirty little hill-men had touched. I am not so generous as Mistress Metta of Overguard."

"I never heard of her, who was she?" asked Michael.

"Overguard is to the north, in Mors. Once there lived in the old manor-house a lady to whom came a little hill-man, and said, 'Mistress Metta of Overguard, will you lend Mistress Metta of Underguard your silken skirt for her bridal dress?' Well, she lent the skirt, and a long time passed and it was not returned, so at last she goes to the hill and cries out, 'Give me back my skirt!' So out comes the hill-man and brings back the skirt, thickly sprinkled over with drops of wax, and says, 'Since you ask for it, take it, but had you waited only a few days longer there should have been a diamond for every wax-stain upon it.'

"That reminds me," said Kirstin, "of something Mr. Ramsey said, namely, that there is generally a meaning in stories though they may not be true; and most of these tales would go to prove that people always do well for themselves when they are kind to others; for instance, I heard a story about a hill-man who was often seen at night, laying out all his bright copper things in the moonlight. And once he came to a woman, and asked her to lend him a loaf, promising to bring her another in two days' time, but she said, no matter for that she would give it him freely. Then the hill-man said, 'Thou hast not given it me for nothing; henceforth all will go well with thee, and thy race shall prosper to the fourth generation.' And his promise came true."

Hendrick Bryde laughed heartily. "Ah! your friends are all so wise, Kirstin, but now you tell us another story, Bodil; you know so many good ones."

Bodil was nothing loth.

"There's a house between Aalborg and Thisted," she said, "where the husband and wife both noticed that the dinner vanished far too quickly however much was placed on table. So they held council as to the cause with the lad who served them, and who had a good head-piece. Now the young fellow knew well that a neighbouring hill was inhabited by little men, and imagining that it was they who helped themselves to a share of the meal, he resolved to watch. So next day when dinner was nearly ready he went to the hill, and laying his ear close to the ground he heard a deal of stir and fuss, one saying to another, 'Give me my hat, dinner is ready.' So, imitating the voices, he called out in his turn, 'Give me my hat,' and somebody answered, 'There is none left but father's old one.' 'That will do,' he rejoined, and forthwith a hat was flung out of the hill. He put it on his head, and could then see the little hill-folk swarming out from the hill and running down to his master's house: he followed them into the room, and found them soon seated at table, making free with a pancake that the goodwife had just served up. The pancake was soon demolished, and one of the hill-men greedily snatching out of the lad's hands his share, he could not help crying out 'For shame,' and made a dart at him with his knife, whereupon the hill-man gave a cry, and the whole party ran away in a fright. The lad then took off the hat which had made him invisible, and asked his mistress and the people of the house if they had seen what went on. They replied

they had heard a scream, and the door bang, but knew nothing more. In the evening, when the serving lad was going to bed, he heard the bucket in the well being drawn up and down, so he put on the hat, went out, and saw the hill-folk watering their tiny horses. He asked them if they had a mind to behave again as they did at dinner, and then they begged and implored him so earnestly to let them water their horses at the well, because they had no water in the hill, that the lad gave them leave on condition that they should never again steal the mid-day meal. Next morning the lad found two gold pieces sticking to the edge of the well, and from that day forth his mistress and family dined in peace, untroubled by unbidden guests."

They were all amused by this story, and the young fisherman cried out, "So like you women; one story about your bridal trumpery, and the other about dinner."

"I am sure you men think enough about your dinner," returned his wife; then addressing the little girl, she said, "Karen, could not you tell us a pretty story?"

"Old Else used to tell me stories," replied Karen, "but they frightened me. I only liked the one about Greta and the Merman."

"Ah! tell us that," said Bodil.

Karen looked down, but with simple earnestness she began in her childish, treble tones, the well-known legend.

"Once upon a time there lived two poor people in the district of Aarhuus, who had an only daughter, named Greta. One day they sent her to the shore to fetch sand, and while she stood filling her apron with it, a Merman rose up out of the water. His beard was greener than the salt sea, but his figure looked well, and he spoke kindly to the maiden, saying, 'Follow me, Greta, and I will give thee as much silver as thy heart can desire.' 'No bad offer that,' she replied, 'for it is just what we are wanting at home.' And she let him talk to her till at last he took her by the hand and carried her down to the depths of the sea, and there she became his wife and the mother of five children. But when a long time had passed, and she had well-nigh forgotten all her Christian bringing-up, as she was sitting one day with her youngest child in her lap, she heard the bells ringing overhead, and a great longing to go again to church came over her. And as she sat there sighing, and shedding bitter tears of anguish, the Merman noticed her

sorrow and asked the cause; and then she begged and implored him so earnestly to let her go to church only once more, that he could not refuse her. Then he took her up to the dry land, bidding her to return as soon as possible to her little ones. And in the midst of the service, she heard the Merman's voice outside the church, calling, 'Greta, Greta;' but she thought she would just wait till the sermon was finished. But when the preacher had done, and the Merman came a second time to the church and called, 'Greta, Greta! art thou not coming soon?' still she did not obey. Then he came a third time, and cried, 'Greta Greta! comest thou not? thy children are crying for thee!' and as she still would not come to him, he began to weep bitterly and went back despairingly to the depths of the sea. But Greta stayed with her parents and left the Merman to take care of his poor little children alone, and his sighs and lamentations are often heard from the deep."

There was a pause when Karen had stopped speaking, for this legend is one of the few which calls forth sympathy with the poor rejected fairy race, with

"That which is neither ill nor well,  
That which is neither heaven nor hell."

"It must have been hard for Greta, giving up her poor little ones," said Bodil Bryde, out of the depths of her motherly heart.

"Did you ever see a Merman or Mermaid, Kirstin?" asked Hendrick.

"I have once or twice when I was bathing in the fiord by moonlight thought I saw a woman's face rising up out of the water, and looking at me with such sad gentle eyes; but Hans laughed at me, and said it must have been a seal."

"Old Magnus hasn't told a story, and his are the best of all," said Bodil; and the old man was now besieged with entreaties.

"There's a funny story about Thorstein and the Dwarfs," said Kirstin, "but it is rather long"—for she noticed little Karen's flushed cheeks, and remembered Morten's dislike to the child's imagination being filled with grotesque, if not revolting pictures. "Suppose, grandfather, you tell us how the elves and hill-folk all went away."

"Yes, they are all gone from this country now, every one," said the old man, speaking in a low, feeble tone, but as he went on his voice gaining strength and animation; "they are gone off to Norway, or

the Feror Isles, or Iceland. They left Zealand long ago, they could not bear the continual ringing of bells, and the drums beating, and other noises. And I told Karen the other day how they were seen leaving Vendsyssel; but do you, any of you, know how they left the island of Erve?"

No one knew, and he was pressed to relate the story. |

"Well," he began, "you must know that [the miller of Dunkiar had plagued them terribly, and at last he must needs plough up their hills, breaking up the ground entirely, and this they could not bear, so they resolved to leave the country and emigrate to Norway. Some say that what I am going to tell happened in Eriskioping, others say in Marstel, but that matters little; this is certain, that one day a little old man came to a very poor skipper who wanted to be hired, and asked him if he would undertake the guidance of a vessel he should provide. Of course the skipper said, 'Yes;' but when the little man took him to the shore at Grisendal, and showed him a miserable wreck of a thing, he objected, saying it was not seaworthy. But the little man bade him engage a seaman and come again in three days, when all should be ready. The skipper had great trouble in hiring a mate, for all he spoke to laughed and turned their backs on him when he spoke of sailing in the wreck at Gravendal; but at last he met with a poor boy who was willing to go for the sake of getting a little food to eat. Well, on the third day the skipper and his boy went together to Gravendal, and there they found the ship lying at anchor, and provided with tattered sails: the wind was fair so they sailed at once. On the way the skipper took it into his head he should like to see his cargo, and peeping down through the trap door, he saw the place below swarming as it were with rats and mice. But then the little man who had hired him took off his hat and put it on the skipper's head, whereupon he became more clearsighted, and could see a multitude of tiny folk clad for travelling, and also a quantity of gold and silver which they were taking with them. When they had reached Norway the old man bade him go inland, for he would unload the ship himself. And when the skipper returned he found the ship empty, and the little man bade him wait three days for his fare. At the end of the three days he came again and told the skipper to fetch two sacks. 'Now shalt thou be paid for thy trouble!' quoth he, and he filled one sack with wood-shavings and the other with sea-coal, and saying, 'Mind



you give the boy his share,' he went away, leaving the skipper not particularly pleased. When they had sailed an hour or so, the skipper said, 'Go to the fire, boy, and make a cup of tea.' 'Yes, master,' answered the boy, 'but I have no firewood.' 'Take a handful of shavings out of the sack then.' 'Skipper, it shines!' cried the boy. 'Then take coals from the other sack.' 'Skipper, it shines!' cried the boy again; so the skipper went to look, and found the one sack full of gold, and the other full of silver coins. When they came back to Cerve they divided their treasure and became wealthy folk. Next year the skipper bought a yacht and sailed to Norway, when the same little old man came to him and asked various questions—how he was getting on? whether he had shared with the boy? and how the miller of Dunkiar was doing? And when the skipper replied that the miller had fallen down and broken his thigh the same day that the hill-folk had left the country, and was now a cripple for life, the answer was, 'No more than he deserved; serves him right.' For you know, my children," concluded old Magnus, "those never thrive who disturbed the elves and hill-folk—but they have left us now, and we can do very well without them."

## CHAPTER IX.

### TREASURE-TROVE.

THE long winter came to an end; the short, rainy spring season had passed; and bright summer sunshine lighted up the Nissumfiord. Karen had lost her cough, and life had returned to her pretty face, elasticity to her lithe form. Kirstin had become so fond of the little maiden, that her recovery would have alone sufficed to give her happiness; but her father, too, seemed more equable and cheerful, and her brother's letters arrived with due regularity. Sometimes, indeed, they were written in a complaining tone, for Hans seemed to consider himself not always sufficiently appreciated by his masters, but his style of composition showed how rapidly he was improving. Kirstin now resumed her visits to the pastor, who declared himself quite satisfied with her progress, and continued to lend her books, which were a never-failing source of enjoyment.

"How tall you are growing, Karen!" said Kirstin, one day: "why, when Morten comes back next year he will hardly know you."

Karen blushed with pleasure at hearing her brother's name, for he

was seldom mentioned between them. "When Morten comes back," she repeated; "yes, I was dreaming about that this morning."

"What, when you waked up crying, and would not tell me why? How should dreaming of Morten make you cry?"

"I don't know," and Karen's countenance fell; "don't people cry for joy sometimes?"

"I have heard so; but now, Karen, tell me what was your dream about, really?"

"Kirstin, I like to keep my dreams to myself," was the mysterious maiden's reply; and Kirstin pressed her no more.

Child as Karen was, she had a character of her own; gentle and impressionable as she seemed, she had her reserves even with her best friends. Morten was the only exception. To the brother who had been her protector and tender companion from infancy, every thought might be revealed; but she fancied it part of her fealty to him to place him above every other friend, even above Kirstin. It was something very touching, the love between the young fisherman and his half-sister, so much his junior, and clinging to him as though he were both father and mother to her. If Morten's object had been to keep his image before Kirstin's mind in the most winning light, he could not have hit on a better expedient than that of quartering Karen upon her; but in this matter the fact was, he had thought only of his sister's advantage, not of his own, and the idea was not one likely to occur to Michael. As has been said, Morten's name was very seldom mentioned by either of the two girls; seldom by Karen, because she was habitually reserved where her strongest feelings were concerned; seldom by Kirstin, because, occupied perpetually, she had little leisure for thinking of the absent, and when her thoughts did fly abroad it was to Copenhagen, or still oftener to Hamburg—very rarely to Norway.

"Karen," said Kirstin, one morning, "I think the bilberries must be ripe now on the moors; shall we go together this afternoon and gather them? Father will not want us to-day after dinner, and we shall have quite a long afternoon to ourselves."

Karen was charmed with the proposal. So after the mid-day meal the two girls set out together with large baskets in their hands.

It was a lovely day; the air clear, the heavens blue; the brown heath—for the purple blossoms were now dying away—bent under their feet, and the wild thyme gave out its refreshing fragrance as

they crushed it. Not even the gentlest breeze stirred the tiny herbs and stunted bushes of the moor. The distant hills bounding the horizon seemed to float like clouds around the plain, and as they watched them, shifted into manifold forms of houses, towers, palaces, and even of moving, living creatures. All was vague and changing as a dream; what at first seemed a hut, transformed itself into a church, then again into a pyramid; the figure of a man took the semblance first of a cow, then of an elephant; here rose a cathedral spire, there towered a grove of tall, dark pines; here rocked a boat, there sailed a stately ship. It was the *Fata Morgana*, the lovely air-phenomenon that delights and cheats the wanderer's eye sometimes on exceptionally clear summer days on the heaths of Jutland. The *Fairy Morgana's* palaces and hanging-gardens were altogether new to Karen, who had never been so far from home in her life before; and Kirstin, to whom the mysterious vision was no novelty, enjoyed it as though it had been so, while watching her sensitive little friend's face of delight. When the changing panorama had all faded away into the light of common day, and only the outlines of common objects surrounded them, Kirstin, looking at her companion, saw that her eyes were full of tears. "Oh, it is all gone!" sighed the child; "I wish it would have stayed."

"Nay, that would not do either," responded Kirstin; "for it might keep us from our work;" and the two now began their business of filling their baskets, robbing the moors of a part of their treasure of bright, ripe berries; there was no fear of scarcity being left behind, the affluence was so great. At last, thoroughly weary, Karen threw herself down on one of the little hillocks covered with the myrtle-like foliage, which she had been so busily rifling.

"Why, Kirstin, you have filled your basket! I shall never be so quick as you in anything."

"Well, we will change baskets now," said Kirstin. "You rest and take care of my treasure;" and she took up Karen's basket and went on gathering, singing to herself the while. The little girl watched her admiringly, thinking, "How good she is—how kind to me—and how clever in everything! Can I ever be like her?" Yet any passer-by would have said Karen had no need to wish to be other than herself. She was tall and slender, perhaps too much so for a child of ten years old, and might have been taken for full three years older. Her face was

oval ; her features perfect, her grey eyes, no longer dreamy, had an eager, inquiring expression, and her cheeks wore a brilliant bloom. "Come and sit down now!" she cried, presently ; and Kirstin, always anxious to please her, at once complied ; it was time to do so, for labour in the sun had heated the elder girl.

"Do you know why I called you?" asked Karen.

"No—why?"

"Because I saw you were getting too hot ; besides, I had thought of something to tell you."

"Well, what is it?"

"This is the place where it happened—at least I can just fancy it was, for it was on this moor ; and look, there is a flock of wild geese flying over our heads."

"You are a little goose yourself, Karen. It is some nonsensical story, I am sure."

"No, I think it is a story you will like. Bodil Bryde told it me the other day when I went to mind the baby, while she was making bread. There was a pedlar passing over the heath, and a couple of robbers attacked him ; he could not defend himself, but whilst they were plundering him, a flock of wild geese flew right over his head, and he cried out, 'Here are our Lord's birds, to be witnesses of your evil deeds!' But they killed him, and went their way, and no one knew who had committed the crime. And years passed away. But one Sunday, as the congregation were gathered in the churchyard, waiting till their pastor should come, all of a sudden a flock of wild geese flew screaming over them, and at the sight a horse-dealer from Holstein said to his companion, 'Look, there are the pedlar's witnesses!' People turned round, and asked what he meant. He stammered, and grew confused ; and when afterwards strictly examined he confessed the crime. It was our Lord's birds, you see, that made him confess."

Kirstin was very much pleased with this legend. She did not know that this story is one of a common stock told by all the Indo-European race, and as well known among Greeks and Indians of old, as among Jutlanders now.

"Ah! you like my story," said the child, stroking Kirstin's hair in her pretty, caressing fashion.

"Yes, I do ; and now I suppose you want to get something out of me in return."

"That is true; I want you to tell me the story you thought too long for grandfather to tell on Christmas-eve. Let me hear it now, darling Kirstin, while we sit and rest."

"It was about Thorstein and the Dwarf; but indeed, Karen, it is a long rigmarole, and I cannot recollect it all. Thorstein was a very strong Norwegian youth, fond of adventures; the end of them was that he married Gudrun, the daughter of an old heathen earl, who was owner of two enormous drinking-horns ornamented with gold. When this old earl died, he was buried under a hill like this where we are sitting, and it was said his ghost was always walking about at night, but he could not haunt Thorstein's house, because he had a cross marked upon every door. At last, one night, Thorstein walked into the hill and took away the large horns which the earl had had buried with him. After that time there was no more ghost-seeing."

"Do you think," said Karen, "there is some old king or earl buried under this hill we are sitting on?"

"Very likely," replied Kirstin; "the pastor, when he showed me his museum, told me the mounds on this part of the moor were mostly artificial. The dead hero, or king, was placed upright on his horse, the earth was thrown up in a circular form, the horse walked into the midst of the mound, and then it was closed up over him."

"Oh, the poor horse!" cried Karen; "what a shame! And were their drinking-horns buried with the kings?"

"Yes, very often; and swords and gold ornaments: there may be something of the sort buried here, but no one would like to dig for it; they would fancy they were disturbing the repose of the dead. Oh, Karen! the sun is setting, and I have not filled the basket. I must make haste;" and she returned to her work.

But Karen did not offer to help her; her mind full of what she had been hearing, she began examining the hillock where she had been resting with lively interest; she even turned aside the bilberry plants that grew so thickly over it, as though the very ordinary black mould covering a heathen chief's resting-place must be worth looking at. Presently her hand came upon something hard, projecting a little from the mould, though hidden from sight by the trailing heather and thick-leaved herbs. She pushed them aside, and tried to remove the earth surrounding it: the more she strove the clearer it became to her that she had something large and heavy in her grasp; at length she called

out, "Kirstin! Kirstin!" in so eager a tone that Kirstin ran up to her almost frightened.

"What are you about, Karen?"

"Oh, Kirstin! I am sure there is one of these horns buried here—do you think it would be wicked to take it out?"

Kirstin laughed.

"Why," she said, "this is something carved, like the things Mr. Nordenfelt showed me. No I don't see any harm in pulling it out of the ground: it is not opening the hill."

"Oh, then, do let us try; I would give anything to see it."

Kirstin set to work vigorously, the little girl helping; the cracks in the soil from the late drought favoured their exertions, and Kirstin had a knife in her basket which was some assistance; unfortunately, however, the knife, poor thing, broke off in the effort, and the blade was left sticking in the mould.

"What can we do now?" asked Kirstin, more amused than distressed by the accident.

"Oh, Kirstin!" exclaimed Karen; "don't you remember last time you came here for some turf you left your spade behind? would you mind going to the spot where you left it? would it tire you too much?"

"Not at all; only we shall be very late—but no matter, I'll fetch it;" and off she ran, pleased to gratify the little maiden.

She soon returned; and, armed with her spade, recommenced operations with such zeal that in a few minutes her exertions were rewarded, and she stood upright, her arms aching, her eyes wide open at the sight of a huge drinking-horn, shaped like that of an ox, but curiously carved.

Karen exclaimed with delight, "Do you think it is gold?"

"There's no knowing what it is made of, it is so spoiled by being in the ground; how ever shall we get it home? my poor arms have had enough work already. Shall I leave it here, and ask father to fetch it to-morrow?"

Karen looked blank at this proposal.

"Oh, I want to examine it so much!"

"But, my child, you will want your supper, I suppose; and it would take a long time to get home with this burthen, and there are the bilberries to carry besides. Oh, I know now what to do; you,

Karen, take your basket and go home, and whoever you come upon first, whether father, or Hendrick Bryde, tell them where to find me, and help carry off this great thing. But are you sure you can find the way?"

"Oh, yes, never fear."

But Karen was too confident in her own recollection of the way she had been brought, in fact she had not given heed to it. Kirstin waited and waited, no one came.

"How foolish of me to let that child go by herself! the moor is everywhere so much alike, the landmarks are so few."

She had plenty of time for self-reproach: an hour passed by, and no one appeared. The sun had set, but the moon was at the full, so it was light enough. She had just resolved upon taking up her basket and going home, when she saw the figure of a man appearing. "Hendrick! father!" she cried out.

The man, who had not perceived her before, started, and came up to her. "Who? Kirstin, Michael's daughter!"

Kirstin started in her turn, for she recognised Niels Petersen, who was, as usual in the evening, considerably the worse for his late visit to a tavern. "Kirstin Ericksen!" he repeated, "wandering alone by the light of the moon. For whom are you waiting, pretty one?"

"I am waiting for my father," she replied, haughtily.

"Father's name is not Hendrick," he retorted. And approaching nearer, he caught sight of the horn. "Where did you find that?" he asked.

"I did not find it at all; Karen Möller found it."

He did not seem to hear her, he was examining the horn. "You and I will go shares in this, Kirstin."

"You shall not touch it, it is Karen's!" she exclaimed.

"Then I will have it all to myself since you are so proud, pretty saint, parson's pet!" and he stooped to pick up the horn. But not for nothing was Kirstin a daughter of the Vikings: her blood boiling over, she said in a resolute tone, "You shall not rob Karen!" and as he sneeringly made some insulting answer, she dealt him a blow that sent him reeling several paces off. At the same moment another black shadow fell across the moonlit heath. "Father!" she exclaimed; and in answer Hendrick Bryde's hearty voice hailed her; "Kirstin! here I am, all right!"

Never had Hendrick received such a cordial welcome from his fair neighbour before, although they were always good friends. "What! fighting, Kirstin? I never knew such a girl, but I say, don't teach that little game to my wife—and who is the offender?"

"Niels Petersen," said the girl, who felt now much inclined to cry. "I could not help it, indeed, he wanted to take this, and it is Karen's?"

"Let us look at this wonderful article. Why, Kirstin, it is worth a king's ransom!" and the young fisherman held the huge horn at arm's length, and surveyed it with great satisfaction.

"Is it really so valuable? are you sure?"

"No doubt of it; but come, take your basket, and let us make haste home. That ill-conditioned fellow!" he muttered; "I wonder what brings him in this part of the country again; no good, I'm sure."

When Michael saw the prize, and Hendrick dilated on its value, his eyes sparkled. "This is yours, Kirstin."

"No, father, it is Karen's; she found it."

Kirstin spoke with a throbbing heart: it cost her a great effort to thwart her father, but it was hardly worth while to defy Niels Petersen in Karen's behalf, and now to give way to home influence.

But Karen herself solved the difficulty. "It is half mine and half Kirstin's," she said, in her sweet, silvery tones. "I found it, but I could not have got it out of the ground without Kirstin, and I should not have tried, if she had not told me what it was."

Kirstin herself was not satisfied with this view of the case, till the pastor, who was next day summoned to make a survey of the horn, pronounced it to be perfectly just. He then, after a close examination, told them that the horn had been bronze with gold ornaments, and was a valuable relic of antiquity, but he could not tell what sum Government might offer for it, as that would depend upon there not being others like it already in the museum at Copenhagen. It was settled that he should take charge of it and negotiate for the sale.

Mr. Nordenfelt was much amused by little Karen's earnestness and enthusiasm in the matter. As he went home, he said to himself, "That child, God willing, will grow up as perfect a creature as her mother was before she married that stump, Claus Möller."


(To be continued.)]



## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER XI.

#### A PILGRIMAGE TO SKAGEN.

 ABOUT six weeks after Karen's death, at the end of July, Morten Ranildsen returned. How, or from whom he first heard of his loss, Kirstin could not tell. That he had heard she knew by his keeping aloof from every one. He went straight to Hendrick Bryde at his own house, and with the exception of a visit to the parsonage, as Bodel reported, he did not leave home for nearly a week. At last, one evening as Kirstin was returning from the moor laden with turf for firing, she met him. Her first impulse was to turn in another direction, but then the thought came, "It will seem so strange, and so unkind;" so she went straight up to him and held out her hand without speaking. Neither did Morten speak a word; he walked by her side till they reached Michael's door, then he said in a low voice, "I want you to go with me to the churchyard."

She understood him; she went in, disposed of her burden, and coming out again immediately, the two again walked in silence together, and she led him to the little mound, the freshest in the churchyard, which marked the spot where his sister had been buried. Morten knelt down and pressed his lips to the sod. When he rose up, Kirstin said hesitatingly, "Grandfather would have carved a cross to set up there, but he waited to ask if you would like it."

"It was like him to be so kind, but I have been carving a stone one which will last longer. Will you wait here, Kirstin, while I go to fetch it?"

He went away without waiting for her answer, taking her assent for granted. "Why should I feel afraid of Morten and want to get away?" Kirstin reasoned with herself; "I was never afraid of him in my life before."

He came back, bearing a spade, and a small stone cross, with only Karen's name and the date of her death carved upon it. Kirstin helped him to put it in its place. "A wooden cross lasts so short a time in our climate," he said; "and this is like what I have seen in some other countries where stone is more plentiful than with us."

"I can't think where you did find that stone," said Kirstin.

"I went a long way to fetch it soon after I came home, for I could not sit still and do nothing. Thank old Magnus for me, Kirstin."

They left the churchyard, and as then their ways parted Kirstin held out her hand to take leave.

"Please walk a little longer with me, Kirstin, for our old friendship's sake."

She could not refuse, and they turned through the sand-hills towards the fiord. It was a pleasant, quiet summer evening; Kirstin at last took courage and said, "I had something to tell you, Morten; Karen sent her love to you with almost her last breath,—she was always thinking of you: I am sure she remembers you now in Paradise."

"I am sure of that too," he replied. "The pastor has told me how good and loving she was to the last. And I have something to say to you, Kirstin—to thank you for all your love and care for her; Bodil Bryde has told me how you nursed her." He paused, but as she did not speak, he went on. "I have more things to say. Have you heard lately of or from that Scotch lady?"

"Mrs. Ramsey? no; neither the pastor nor I have heard for more than a year. I am afraid she is in trouble; I do not believe she has forgotten us."

"Is there any likelihood of your going to her—to Hamburg, after all?"

"Not the least; she never asked me after I had told her that I could not leave father and grandfather: she said I was right."

"Then I cannot go away without asking one more question, Kirstin: will you be my wife? you shall still look after your father and old Magnus." She was silent and he continued—"I should then stay here in my old home, otherwise I must go abroad again, for I cannot live here alone. I know I am not good enough for you, but your father has not prospered lately, so he cannot now object to me; and indeed I am more thriving than I was; I have saved money, and I shall try to improve myself, that I may become more worthy of you."

"We will try to improve each other," said Kirstin, in a low voice.

"Then you will have me, Kirstin?"

"Yes, Morten," she replied, very quietly and with no hesitation in her voice, though her heart beat fast.

"God bless you, Kirstin!" There were tears in his eyes as he spoke.

When Kirstin went in doors, her father looked up, and made some remark about her being late. This was unusual with him, for he rarely spoke to her without necessity. She hardly answered, and began her preparations for supper very zealously. When her father and grandfather were both seated at table, she said gently, though with a heightened colour, "Father, I am troth-plighted to Morten Ranildsen."

Michael started up from table, and spoke in great anger. "How dared you do any such thing without speaking to me first?"

"Morten said he was better off now, and we were poorer, and so he thought you would not mind it. And you know, father, we have always been friends." Poor Kirstin had taken her courage as it were in both hands, but her heart began to fail her.

"Who dares to say I am poor?" thundered out Michael. "I forbid you to speak to Morten Ranildsen again."

"As you please, father," said the girl, turning very pale; "only I must speak to him once more to say you have forbidden it—and, father, I have given him my troth, so I cannot marry any one else."

Michael spoke not a word more, but sat in fixed displeasure. The old man looked distressed, and gently shook his head. Kirstin wondered why he would not speak a word for her. No one tasted a morsel of supper, and Kirstin went to bed with a heavy heart, for she knew her father too well to hope that he would change his mind on the morrow.

For three days she went through her usual duties drearily: she saw nothing of Morten, and there was less discourse than ever between the three inmates of the cottage, which had been terribly silent ever since Karen's death. At last, one afternoon, as she was sitting at her spinning-wheel, a tap at the window made her look up. She saw Morten standing outside. He beckoned, and she went out to him. "Your father has forbidden me his house, so I was compelled to ask you to come out to me," he said.

"I know that," she replied, sadly.

"Do you know the cause of his rejecting me?"

"No, he explained nothing."

"There is a piece of ground that he and Claus Möller, my stepfather, both laid claim to. Had Karen lived I must have defended her rights, but now I have told your father I freely give up my claim. 'Then,' he replies, 'it will be Kirstin's, and she will be no portionless bride, and may look for something better than marriage with you.'"

Morten paused, and then said, "Kirstin, now you have heard all this, do you wish to withdraw your promise to me?"

"I don't think I quite understand," she said; "I must obey my father while he lives: I have told him that I am troth-plighted, and that I cannot marry any one else—and—and—you can wait for me, if you care to wait."

"Kirstin!" he exclaimed indignantly. But it is hardly worth while to chronicle more of their conversation; it ended with farewell, so Morten might be excused for making it as long as he could.

He left the Nissumfiord the same day; thus Kirstin's little romance came to a speedy conclusion, and life at the fisherman's cottage resumed its former dreary and monotonous course.

Mr. Nordenfelt had bade her fight her battle with a brave heart. Often did these words recur to Kirstin as she got up in the early morning and prepared for her daily round of cheerless toil. Books now were her only pleasure; her brother's letters, for some cause or other, came less frequently: Kirstin guessed it might be because her answers had so little in them to interest him; what had she to tell him after Karen's death? Morten's brief visit, and her own betrothal she did not like to write about. But to her, at least, Morten's love was a reality, and no dream of fancy; the entire trust she felt in it brought comfort, and after a time she began again to sing over her work, although in a quieter and less joyous tone than formerly.

Not long, however, lasted this season of peace. Old Magnus had long been growing weaker, and now he never left the house: his hands had no strength for work, his mind had lost all energy. He liked Kirstin to be near him, and could listen to her when any other exertion fatigued him. But when the pastor, at Kirstin's suggestion, came to see him, the old man could not take pleasure in his visits as he used during Karen's illness. He liked Kirstin to repeat hymns and portions of Scripture, and then his kindling eyes showed how much interest he took in certain verses, but he rarely made more than a brief answer to anything she said. Before the autumn rains began he sank visibly: there was no other appearance of decay than simply entire loss of strength. He was lifted out of bed and dressed every day to the last, and sat in the warmest corner of the kitchen. One night on being put into bed he bade God bless his Kirstin with unusual fervour. Kirstin got up in the course of the night, as was

her custom, to see if he wanted anything. He was lying so still she thought he was asleep, and stole softly back to avoid disturbing him. But in the morning he was found to have been dead some hours, his face wearing a placid look of perfect repose, his hands folded, his eyes closed: apparently he had died in the act of prayer.

Michael's feelings towards his daughter seemed somewhat softened by his father's death, and he spoke to her occasionally with as much tenderness as his nature was capable of. Hans, too, seemed to feel for his sister's loneliness, and wrote to her very kindly and affectionately. He inclosed some certificates from his masters, written apparently for the satisfaction of friends at home: they spoke of the youth as having shown abundant promise of future power. Kirstin was much pleased and comforted by her brother's thoughtfulness of her, and in answering, asked him if he could not make inquiries concerning Mrs. Ramsey: some one, she thought, must surely know the Scotch merchant who had placed Hans at school, and was, she believed, a frequent visitor at Copenhagen.

The morning after Kirstin had thus written, her father said to her, "Kirstin, did you know you had an aunt living at Old Skagen?"

"Yes, father, I know that mother's sister used to live there."

"She lives there still, and some time ago she sent me a message to the intent that she wished to see her sister's daughter, and that you must pay her a visit before winter. So get your clothes in order, and be ready to go next week."

Kirstin could hardly believe her ears. "But, father, I never saw her, and I never paid a visit in my life." No answer coming, she presently asked, "How long am I to stay?"

"A week, a month, as madam chooses. She is well off; she can afford to keep you."

"And are you going with me?"

"No, I don't live in other men's houses."

"And how can you do without me, father?"

"Very well: you might have gone before, only your grandfather wanted you."

"And nobody wants me now," thought Kirstin with a swelling heart. She prepared for her visit with anything but cheerful alacrity: funerals seemed to her more natural than visits. And how did she know that her aunt was really desirous to have her? She questioned

her father timidly the next day about this unseen relation, and learned that her aunt lived rather a solitary life; that her husband—a fisherman, but a man of substance, the owner of several vessels—had been dead some years; and that one of the two sons had been drowned at sea, the other generally absent on voyages.

"Your aunt is a rich woman," Michael added, "and can leave her money to whomsoever she chooses." Here he stopped short and relapsed into his usual taciturn mood, but Kirstin could guess that he hoped her aunt would take a fancy to her and leave her part of her savings. "He means it all for my good," she said with a sigh; that sigh meant "a little love, a little home-cheerfulness would be better than money."

Her next inquiry was, how she was to travel to Skagen: this, it seemed, was already settled. Her father would take her to Viborg, and there put her under the charge of a man from Aalborg, who on his return would take her in his cart so far, and show her how to get ferried over the Limesfjord, whence she might walk to her aunt's.

It was a curious conveyance, this cart which was to take her to Aalborg; it was drawn by two oxen, and could open and shut up: it was painted red, with blue and white flowers on it. The driver sold eels, but they were all disposed of before Kirstin took her seat beside him.

She had not expected to enjoy her expedition, yet she did enjoy it: there was so much pleasure in seeing trees and shrubs, such as will not grow near the sea. The time for blossoms and fragrance was past, but there was still foliage and much to delight the eye. The oxen drew the cart slowly, now over the brown heath, now through deep sand, and her companion, unlike Michael, was a regular Jutlander, jovial and talkative. Kirstin gratified him by her frankly-expressed pleasure in everything they passed. An old manor-house half hidden by trees, a green moat girdling it round, particularly struck her fancy; such a quaint round tower rising from the inner court! "Ah!" she exclaimed, "this is just what Mrs. Ramsey would have liked to sketch, how pretty it is!"

"Yes," rejoined her companion, briskly; "it is a pretty sight, isn't it? that milk-cart going over the bridge, with such big cans, and the milk slopping over! It is a nice thing to keep cows! and there's a lake under the beech trees full of fish: you may see the nets hanging

out to dry in the orchard. Ah! you keep your eyes open, don't you, Kirstin, Michael's daughter? You're one of the girls who found a golden horn, aren't you?"

"A bronze horn, not a golden one."

"Ah, well! I knew a man who, in Oxholme, a while ago, sank into a bog, and as he scrambled out, something clung round his leg; he thought it was a snake, but no, it was a thick, big gold ring such as a king might have worn round his neck. He sold it for five hundred dollars, and it is now in the king's museum; you had no such luck, had you? Do you see that brook? It is the Ry river: in some places it's so wide and deep a ship might sail in it, though here, you see, it's low and overgrown with reeds, and you may wade through it if you've a mind. But there's one place where it winds through the Wild Moor—you know the Wild Moor?—there it is very deep indeed, and there the river takes a man's life every year. Sometimes a year has been known to pass without any one being drowned in it, but then you may make sure that the next year two lives will be taken instead of one. And they say that just when the river craves its offering, which is always at sunset, a warning voice is heard rising out from the deep, and that this is repeated every night till a corpse has been found among the reeds; after that the river is silent."

Gloomy legends like this sound oddly from the lips of a jolly-looking fellow, and Kirstin felt more disposed to laugh at them than to shudder. She laughed outright when, on encountering a carriage occupied by tourists who inquired the way to Aalborg, her companion replied after this fashion: "Going to Aalborg, are you? And gentlefolks, excuse me, but where did you come from?"

"What is that to you?" was the natural rejoinder; "we want to get on farther before the rain which is coming wets us through."

"Yes, it will rain, certainly; it usually rains, or hails, or snows in Jutland; but what matter? the wind will dry your clothes, gentlefolks, in no time. I think you must be strangers."

"We want to know the way to Aalborg," repeated the spokesman of the party, impatiently.

"Yes, I can see the gentleman is an Englishman, he is in such a hurry, and possibly he comes from Mariager or from Aarhus? But I am going to Aalborg, so the gentleman has only to follow me, and his party will get there all right."

The stranger burst into something like an oath at the idea of his pair of high-stepping horses following in the wake of this ox-drawn cart, and the carriage rattled past them. "Yes, they are strangers," concluded Kirstin's companion; and so they certainly were, or they would have been more patient with a Jutlander's habit of parrying one question with another.

"People are changed at Aalborg since the time when the proverb ran, 'At Aalborg Sound end law and right;' there are good folk at Aalborg now."

"I hope so," rejoined Kirstin, "as I am to sleep there." And she had, in truth, no reason to complain of Aalborg hospitality, her conductor's wife received and entertained her kindly.

The rest of her journey, after crossing the Sümfiord in a ferry-boat, Kirstin performed on foot. As she approached the village to which she was bound, the sand became deeper than near the Nissumfiord at home. Still it was the same kind of scenery as that to which she was accustomed; first, the brown moor, varied with patches of yellow sand; then, having passed the moorland, only a wide expanse of sand, glistening like snow in the evening light. She could just discern the boats on the shore; the nets hung out to dry. All this was home-like. She entered the village, the sand (looser than it was at home) made it a positive toil to get on. Every cottage stood by itself on a square plot of ground—pretty, clean, striped dwellings, such as she was used to see, cheered her way, and she soon distinguished the Parsonage shut in by a tiny grove from the wind. Flocks of wild swans and sea-gulls flew overhead, their white feathers shining like silver in the light of the setting sun, their loud cry piercing the air.

Following the directions given her, she came to a long, low, one-storied house surrounded by a group of outhouses roofed by inverted boats, and where a few fragments of wreck, pieced together, provided pig-styes, while (as at home) long rows of fish, hung up on ropes to dry, fluttered to and fro in the wind. The strong scent of fish that pervaded the atmosphere around could not offend Kirstin's olfactory nerves, for she was used to it; the door of her aunt's house was before her: it was on the latch, so after a little hesitation, she first tapped and then entered.

A stout, comfortable-looking dame, in a frilled cap, spotlessly white, was seated at her spinning-wheel, the constant whirr, whirr making it



impossible for her to hear Kirstin's modest tap at the door. But the footfall of wooden shoes roused her attention, and she stopped her wheel as the girl approached her. Kirstin said shyly, "If you please, I am Kirstin, Michael's daughter," but she had no time or need to say more; "Welcome, my niece!" and a hearty salutation on the cheek prevented farther explanation. Kirstin was made to sit down on the wooden settle beside her aunt, and then followed questions about her journey, her father's health, her grandfather's death, her brother's schooling at Copenhagen, and then a minute examination of Kirstin's face, which was announced to be like her mother's. "But," continued her aunt, "there's a look of your father in you, niece." A pause ensued, and afterwards the good dame raised her voice imperiously, saying, "Maren and Metta, lazy girls, make haste and get the supper ready; my niece Kirstin, Michael's daughter, will be starved."

Maren and Metta, two comely, rosy maidens, appeared in double quick time, and eyed the new-comer with eager curiosity. "Shake hands with them, niece, and don't be proud," said the mistress, and Kirstin did as she was bid.

The supper was soon on the table, and very excellent it was; Kirstin, who had scarcely eaten anything since breakfast, satisfied her aunt by doing full justice to Skagen fare. The two maidens sat down with them, and also a farm-servant and a boy. Poor Kirstin soon felt very weary, for she had been afoot nearly all day. She could not rouse herself for conversation, and her aunt seeing this, patted her on the back, saying, "My child, you must sleep; you are tired out; we will make acquaintance to-morrow." She was indeed too sleepy to feel shy or strange in the little cabin-bed, not unlike those in Breton cottages, to which she was conducted. She fell asleep without even wondering, "How shall I like my aunt?"

*(To be continued.)*





**KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.**

## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### KIRSTIN'S RELATIONS.

**N**OW shall I like my aunt? was Kirstin's first thought on waking the morning after her arrival in Skagen; and she was now not too weary to consider that point.

Aunt Malfred, as she wished to be called, was tall and stout, with quick piercing grey eyes and a high colour. She was always busy, always observant; nothing escaped her notice. Kirstin could hardly recollect her mother, but she felt sure the two sisters were very unlike.

"Did you know this was Sunday morning, niece?" inquired the aunt at breakfast time.

Kirstin smiled. "Yes, Aunt Malfred, I was not likely to forget it; I am very fond of Sunday."

"How do you spend it at home?"

"I always go to church, so did Hans when he lived at home, and father goes sometimes. Do you go to Skagen or Old Skagen church?"

"Old Skagen church is half buried in sand: no one has been inside it since 1775. We are very proud of Skagen church: it is the largest church north of the Lime-fiord."

So to Skagen church they went. Kirstin had never seen anything like it before. There was the Virgin Mother with a gold crown on her head, and the Infant Saviour in her arms, just as though they were alive, she thought: there were carved figures of the holy apostles in the choir, and on the walls of the nave hung portraits of Skagen's old burgomasters and councillors.

And the pulpit was richly carved; and how the sun shone in on the brass corona, and the little ship hanging from the ceiling! And the organ sounded, and the choir sang: Kirstin had never heard such grand music: her aunt was well pleased with her look of delight.

Next day, Aunt Malfred informed Kirstin that she was to stay with her a whole week, but that it would not be good for her to do nothing all that time. She wanted to know what she was used to do at home; to

which Kirstin replied, "Everything ; we keep no servant." Then she was told she should here take her aunt's place and be housekeeper, while her aunt devoted herself to knitting. Kirstin guessed that this arrangement was made in order to test her powers in housewifery ; and never having been used to direct others, she felt a little awkward, especially as she knew her aunt's sharp eye was incessantly watching her ; but she did her best, and when told that her way was wrong, she submitted with such good humour to be set right, that the old lady was much pleased. And new scenes and new companions really did her good : they roused her from a rather despondent mood into which she had not unnaturally fallen of late. Thus cheered and stimulated by exertion, she proved to be not bad company. At the end of the week, when Kirstin took it for granted that she was to go home, she was told, not exactly invited, to stay another week.

"I want you for two reasons," said her aunt; "first, I should like to take both the girls to church to-morrow, and I cannot, unless you stay to mind the house. Secondly, I expect your cousin home next week, and as you may not be in this neighbourhood again, you may as well make his acquaintance now."

Kirstin felt disappointed at not going to church on the second Sunday, for it was the greatest pleasure she had enjoyed during her visit; but of course her aunt's will was not to be disputed. After seeing the others off, she sat down and began to read: some old books on her aunt's book-shelves had attracted her attention, this was a good opportunity of examining them. She did not, however, find in them anything to interest her, so putting them back in their places, she went into her bedroom to fetch her Bible. Returning to the kitchen, the sound of footsteps attracted her notice, and looking up she found herself confronted by a man like a Jutland peasant, dressed as for church, in silver-buttoned coat and broad-brimmed hat. "How did you come here?" she asked; "what do you want?"

In answer, he showed her a cutlass, saying, "Give me the key of the oak chest instantly."

Kirstin's heart leaped into her mouth: there was not a moment for deliberation, so she gave him the keys. He pitched upon the door-key first, turned the lock that she might not escape, and then, seeming to be well acquainted with the general arrangements of the house, selected the key that fitted the oak chest, and having lifted the lid, bent down

over its contents. Kirstin, as has been said before, was a vigorous maiden : she seized the opportunity, and suddenly stooping down, caught hold of the man's ankles, and, exerting all her strength, turned him head-foremost into the chest, pressed down the heavy lid, and locked him in. She then opened the house door and ran out, calling, "Karl ! Antony !" as loud as she could.

Little Antony ran up to her: "Here I am, Kirstin, Michael's daughter."

"Where is Karl?" she asked.

"I don't know : he told me to stay here, and said he would beat me if I stirred."

"Never mind : run to the church, and call somebody out to help. Say there is a robber in aunt's house."

The boy ran at full speed : when he was gone, Kirstin, looking round, thought she could see Karl, the man who did the hard work of the little farm, at the other side of the out-houses. He was a down-looking, surly-spoken fellow. She beckoned to him, but he seemed unwilling to be noticed. She ran up to him, "Karl, there's a robber in the house."

"Hold your noise," he replied, and flung a rake at her : it struck her on the forehead, and she fell, stunned and bleeding. For some time she lay, not altogether unconscious, but feeling it impossible to rise without assistance. At last it came, and she was surrounded by eager questioners. "There's a man in aunt's chest," she gasped out ; "the keys are in my pocket, but you must take them out, for I can't move."

Some one helped her to rise and seated her on the ground, for she could not stand. She was so bewildered she hardly knew what was passing around her, but she had given information enough : the keys were lodged in safe hands, and the robber secured and taken off to the magistrate. Karl, his accomplice, had, it appeared, taken flight at sight of the folks coming from church. And when Kirstin's head had been bound up and restoratives applied, she was able to give a lucid account of the whole matter : she was, however, during the rest of the day dizzy and feverish, for the excitement she had gone through, as well as the blow received, could not but leave effects requiring time and rest, and she was accordingly left by her aunt to the repose she needed.

She was awake all night, but towards morning the fever abated and she fell into a sound sleep. In the afternoon she was sufficiently recovered to take her usual place near her aunt, and the two sat quietly

together, the one knitting, the other spinning. Later in the evening, just as it was getting dusk, an impetuous hand was laid on the latch, and a young, clear, ringing voice hailed them. "Here I am, old mother! here I am, in time to see the girl who is a match for two robbers at once. Cousin Kirstin, I am proud to make your acquaintance!" And before Kirstin knew what he was about, he had kissed her on both cheeks.

"What a hurry you're in, my boy, Otto!" cried his mother, reprovingly; "but you have brought the colour back to your cousin's face, anyhow."

Kirstin, recovering from her astonishment, looked at the new comer. Otto Didricksen was a hearty-looking sailor, with his mother's quick grey eyes and restless movements: he had a quantity of fair hair that hung about his face and shoulders like a lion's mane: his voice was very pleasant to Kirstin, it was so clear and musical. She thought she had heard it before. As now, having seated himself, he began giving an account of his last voyage to his mother, occasionally looking roguishly at his cousin, she watched him with increasing interest till at last she exclaimed, "The man from Moen!"

Otto, at this, burst into a fit of hearty laughter. "Not now, pretty cousin," he said; "I am the man from the Feloe Isles to-day!—and, mother, I have brought such an appetite with me: let us have a famous supper to-night in honour of this cousinly meeting."

Aunt Malfred on this hint got up and said she would see about it; Kirstin was to sit still and entertain her boy.

Kirstin's part was soon taken. She looked up into her cousin's face, and said, "Why did you not tell me, when we met at the harvest-feast two years ago, that you were my cousin?"

Otto, not often embarrassed, felt a little at a loss for an answer—"Because—because it was settled I should not."

"Who settled it?—my father?"

"Yes," he replied, recovering himself; "and now you will next ask why? and I have no mind to be catechised after this fashion. A week hence, Cousin Kirstin, I will tell you why, or my mother shall, and meanwhile I will confess I have a strong turn for masquerading: I have no fancy for always coming into a place, shouting, 'Here is Otto Didricksen!'"

Kirstin laughed, and he went on talking to her about his voyages in

a lively strain, not altogether devoid of egotism. The chat went on pleasantly till supper was ready, on the magnificent scale that Otto had suggested. Different kinds of fish graced the board, with plovers' eggs, swans' eggs, and wine from the Skagen wine-cellar—the stormy sea. Otto after supper sang several songs at his mother's request, and his voice was as good as when, at the harvest-feast near the Nissum Fiord, he sang those verses which Kirstin so well remembered. She went to bed pleased to have found such a pleasant cousin.

The next week was one of entertainments. There was not much to be seen at Skagen, but Otto made the most of what there was. He showed Kirstin the lighthouse one day; next day took her for a ramble on the sea-shore, where ten shipwrecked vessels lay side by side, stranded on the sand. Another day they went to a grand festival held in a barn after rape-threshing: there was singing and dancing, and Kirstin was surprised to find herself an object of general admiration. It did not occur to her that she was the heroine of a recent drama in real life, and the guest of wealthy people. Lastly, the cousins drove to the pretty little seaport of Frederickshaven, where they amused themselves by visiting the harbour, and walking in the public gardens.

It was on their drive home from Frederickshaven that Otto, after a pause in the conversation, said, "Now, Cousin Kirstin, if you like I will tell you why my name was not made known at the harvest-feast. I tell you now, because you say you will go home to-morrow. Your father and my mother had made up their minds we were to be man and wife." Kirstin looked at him with astonishment. "Please don't look in that way," he continued; "it is just as though it were something incredible, which is not flattering, you know; well, I said I would go and look at you"—here he had the grace to blush. "I would not come to your father's house for fear of his committing me—you know—we met at the harvest-feast."

"What did you think of me, Cousin Otto?" asked Kirstin, laughing outright.

Otto was vexed, for her coolness in the matter was a little grating. "I thought you were pretty," he replied; "you make me downright, cousin—but I said you were very young, almost a child; I did not want to be engaged so soon, and so nothing was settled. Well, then we heard your fortune was lost—cousin, you must not think the worse of a fellow for being frank—then your father sent word he had some

land for your portion, and mother said, 'Let her come and see me, and perhaps the cousins will meet again.' And now, cousin, we have had a week together, and you are no longer a child: you must have seen that I liked you, what do you think of me? Can you like me well enough to——"

Kirstin had been trying before now to interrupt him, but he would not let her. "Please, Cousin Otto, stop!" she cried. "Indeed, cousin, you must not ask me, I am troth-plighted."

"Troth-plighted! to whom?"

"To Morten Ranildsen! Oh, Cousin Otto! I am so sorry; just now I thought, what a good thing it is he did not think me pretty two years ago: now he cannot think me so at all, with my face tied up and a bruise on my cheek, though, to say the truth, I was vexed about it when you first came."

"Were you, Kirstin? then you did think of pleasing me a little! And how you mistake me! There are plenty of pretty girls I might easily find, but I am proud of you—proud of your spirit and courage. As to Morten Ranildsen, he is only a poor sailor, and your father will never let you have him. Are you sure you cannot take me, Kirstin?"

"Quite sure, thank you, cousin; and you must not say a word against Morten, please. Remember that two years ago you did not care for me, so you ought not to be angry at my refusing you now."

Otto had no answer ready, and the rest of the drive home was silent enough, for he could not quite dissemble his mortification. The evening, too, was very unpleasant, for Aunt Malfred, seeing the cousins embarrassed and ill at ease, questioned them both. Very much offended she was that her son should be rejected: that a poor man like Morten Ranildsen should be preferred to him was to her a thing incredible, and, forgetting her obligations to Kirstin, her behaviour was worse than uncivil. She told her in plain terms that she was a fool; wanted to know if her cousin were not good enough for her; and ended with saying, "Never think, niece, you will ever get a penny of my money, nor even a trinket; I shall give all to Otto and his wife."

At this Kirstin's spirit was roused, and she answered, "Aunt Malfred, I do not want either your money or trinkets; you have been very kind to me, and so has Cousin Otto, and I like you both, and wanted to be friends with you, but Morten Ranildsen has loved me all



my life. He never considered whether I was pretty or not, and he asked me to be his wife when I was portionless. You, Cousin Otto, have known me only a few days; you cannot really want me very much, and I do hope you will be kind, and not make me and father quarrel, by pressing me to break my promise to Morten."

Otto, at this appeal to his generosity, could no longer indulge the feelings of pride and disappointment which had been aroused within him, and declared with sailorly vehemence that his cousin should never be molested through him, that enough had been said on the matter, and he would stand no more discussion.

But Aunt Malfred could not be propitiated; she parted from her niece that night in high displeasure, and accosted her very coldly next morning. Kirstin made the necessary preparations for her journey home, and timidly approached her aunt to take leave, but she was dismissed with these words, "I am sorry to think that either my sister's daughter is a fool or that we are not good enough for her," upon which Otto became indignant, and an unpleasant scene followed. He insisted upon seeing Kirstin safe home, to which she would not consent, knowing how much it would vex his mother; however, she could not prevent him from accompanying her to the ferry, and this was a long walk. When they arrived at the Lime-fiord he consigned her to the care of the ferryman, and she held out her hand, saying, "Please forgive me, cousin, for occasioning you pain; let us part friends."

"Kirstin," he replied, "are there any more girls like you living near the Nissum-fiord? because if there are I shall come there to fetch a wife, after all."

So the cousins parted, and so ended Kirstin's expedition to Skagen.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### KIRSTIN'S LAST DAYS AT HOME.

KIRSTIN had fought her battle gallantly with both her aunt and cousin—the cool behaviour of the latter two years before having given her some vantage-ground—but her heart failed her at the thought of her father's anger when told of the bad success of his plans. Then she comforted herself by thinking of Morten—of his tenderness to his little sister, his constancy to herself—of the tears in his brave eyes when they parted. Cousin Otto was frank, and manly, and kind, but the

affection she had rejected was indeed different from that she had possessed so long, and which was her chief earthly treasure. Then resolutely turning her mind away from thoughts of either Otto or Morten, she gave herself to the present hour, nursed a baby for the woman who sat beside her in the boat, and listened with a smile to the stories of the ferryman.

Her journey soon came to an end, and now she was very near her home, and the old familiar sand-hills were closing around her. It seemed strange that she had met no one on her way who could give her tidings, good or bad; and in her anxiety to see her father again, and make sure all was well with him, she forgot her dread of his anger. Kirstin had never been away from home except during the short excursion with the Ramseys, and then matters had not gone on so prosperously as to encourage her that all might go well during a longer absence. Nearly three weeks had she been away; the autumn rains had now frozen into winter snows, and a cold reception seemed to await her. More and more eagerly she pressed forward, a fierce wind disputing every inch of the way, her arms aching with the weight of the burden she had to carry.

She found the door of her home on the latch, so the fisherman must be within. She entered without tapping; "Father," she said. No answer came; she looked around; the floor was swept, the kitchen in neater order than her father's hands would have made it; the good-humoured Bodil had probably been busy here: there lay no nets about, no pipe, no trace of her father at all. "Father," she called, louder this time; and Michael's deep voice answered from his bedroom, "Kirstin, come here."

Michael the fisherman was confined to his bed. About ten days before Kirstin's return he had gone out at night with Hendrik in aid of the crew of a vessel stranded on the terrible sand-reefs: the waves had torn up from the sand a spar from a former wreck, and flung it against him with such force as to maim him fearfully. His companion had brought him home in a state of insensibility, a fever had ensued, through which the natural strength of his iron constitution had carried him, but a cripple he was and must remain.

This story Michael told his daughter himself, holding her hands tight, and looking earnestly in her face, but with no tremor in his voice, which kept its old gruff tones, though they were rather weaker

than formerly. His face was much altered: the eagle features sharper than ever, his keen grey eyes sunken, his cheeks fallen away. Kirstin flung herself on his breast in an agony of tears, and he did not repel her: he held her close and suffered her caresses. At last he said, in the old tone of command, "Get up now, Kirstin, and don't cry any more."

Kirstin's tears stopped directly; she felt as if, even were her father to bid her marry Otto Didricksen on the spot, she must obey him now. He began on the dreaded subject at once. "Fetch a chair and sit down by me. How did you leave Malfred, Didrick's wife? was she pleased with you?"

"Aunt Malfred liked me at first, but she was very angry when I left her."

"Why? how did you offend her?"

"I refused to marry my Cousin Otto." The minute the words were uttered Kirstin repented them. Could she not have expressed herself otherwise? have softened the disappointment to him a little? But here she was mistaken, the direct style of answer always suited Michael best; ill or well, he was still the same.

His next speech took her by surprise.

"But now you will change your mind; you will go back and try to please her in any way you can?" He was looking keenly at her.

"Why should I change my mind, father? how could I leave you here by yourself, ill?"

"I cannot support you any longer, Kirstin. I shall never go out to sea again. And the field that should have been yours I have told Hendrik I shall make over to him, for he has been spending his money upon me lately."

"Then, father," replied Kirstin, the colour coming back to her pale cheeks, "in that case Aunt Malfred will certainly not want to see me again. And I go back to be her humble dependent! that I could not do. Dearest father, it is now my turn to support you. I shall be so happy in working for you." She ventured to kiss him again: he endured it, but with a sigh, and Kirstin felt that his state of dependence was the bitterest drop in his cup.

She saw that whatever rough days were in store for her he must not see that she suffered; she resolved to be always cheerful and happy. Her first care was to look out for work that would not take her

entirely from home ; and in a few days she heard that a girl was wanted to do household work in a farm-house, some four or five miles inland, and whence, if she were not afraid of the walk on dark winter nights and mornings, she might always go home to sleep. Afraid! she would not let herself be afraid ; the place was exactly what suited her.

And now her strength seemed to increase with the calls made upon it, her spirit to rise to the emergency : she was much happier, getting up in the dark, walking through snow and wind to the farm, and toiling all day for a sharp-tempered mistress, a sour-visaged master, and fractious children, than she had been during the silent summer days that had followed Karen's death, when there seemed little to do, and still less that she could care to do.

Books and lessons, she had done with them certainly, and with the pleasure they could afford. She thought sometimes, with a sigh, "I wonder whether I shall forget how to read! Father did, and Bodil, too, says she has forgotten ; well, I need not complain, for she does not mind it a bit."

One hardship, however, she did feel very much, and that was being obliged to work on Sundays ; she could never go to church. Meeting Mr. Nordenfelt one evening on her return home, she told him of this trouble, adding that she thought her mistress might spare her sometimes, but that she did not seem to care for going to church any more than if she had been a heathen. He asked if there were any other service for which it might be exchanged ; she replied, no ; whereupon he bade her remember how, in days of old, Christian servants had to obey heathen masters, and how St. Paul had enjoined true, hearty service upon them, none the less. Of course such were debarred from attending the assemblies of the faithful ; but had not their Master in heaven made good the loss, giving them, amid their lives of monotonous toil among the unbelievers, such grace, such faith, as enabled them to brave the sharpest terrors of persecution—to encounter the lion or the stake with a firm heart and joyful face? He bade her try to make her prayers, that must needs be brief, very earnest and fervent, and counselled her always to read at least one text in her Bible before leaving her bedroom. Kirstin thanked him, and went on her way cheered and comforted.

Meantime Michael had made some progress towards recovery : with

the aid of a crutch, and his daughter or neighbour, he was removed daily from his bed to a couch in the kitchen. About noon-day Bodil or her husband came in and gave him his dinner, amusing him with a little gossip. Mr. Nordenfelt called in sometimes, but he and Michael did not get on very well together, for Michael's fiery nature, although softened by his illness, could never bear anything like instruction or exhortation. He would let Kirstin read to him a little at night, but more often interrupted her with an imperious, "Go to bed, Kirstin; I will not have you worn out." But he was more gentle than formerly: he never thanked her for anything she did for him, but Kirstin was satisfied, for she knew she was becoming dearer to him every day; that he looked for her return every night more and more eagerly; and that it was not only from pride, but from love to her that he now curbed the old passionate spirit, outbursts of which had so often made her tremble. Honest, hearty Hendrik was the only visitor whose society he seemed to care for; and the good-natured young man spent many an hour with him when at home, sometimes bringing news of the neighbourhood, or an account of his luck in fishing, sometimes sitting beside him mending his nets, both smoking the pipe of silence.

Still, though too proud to complain, Michael suffered sorely: loneliness, inaction, and the sense of dependence were a heavy burden upon his soul; and probably he chafed the more because, in his resolute self-restraint, he denied himself the savage outbreaks of impatience and wrath that would have been natural to one of his temper. He grew thinner and thinner, his strength decreased daily.

One evening he abruptly broke silence with, "Kirstin, are you never angry with me for having sent Morten Ranildsen away?"

"No, father," she replied, very quietly; "I know you thought it was for my good."

"I had better have seen you a poor man's wife than serving for hire," he muttered, half to himself, and turned on his side with a groan. But Kirstin knew him too well to make any reply, or seem to take notice of his repentance.

Christmas Eve arrived, and a busy time it was at the wealthy farmer's where Kirstin was serving. The farmer himself was rather closefisted, but his wife, sharp-tempered but liberal, took good care that his frugality should not interfere with her yule hospitalities, which were on a larger scale than any Kirstin had ever before

witnessed. The savour of roast goose and other viands pervaded the whole house, for a party of guests was expected. Kirstin's work, however, on that day was mostly to attend to the live stock about the farm: the cows, and horses, and poultry were her charge; they were all to be well fed. The clock was striking four in the afternoon when, as Kirstin had just tied the wheatsheaf to a pole, her mistress came out into the courtyard, unchained the watch-dog, and called him into the house. Kirstin followed, that she might see the old fellow receive his Christmas bounty; it was so pleasant to watch the mistress as she cut slices off from the long brown loaf, and give them to the dog, saying, at each slice, "This one for my husband, this one for myself, here's for Hans, here's for Greta, here's for Maren, and here's for Jørgen," naming each of her four children, and giving him a slice for each. Had there been "trillinge," or three babies in the cradle, as is not unusual in Jutland homes, she must have divided a slice into three for them.

"Now, Kirstin, go fetch him his usual supper." She did so, and as poor old Kung took it with undiminished appetite, his mistress addressed him thus: "Good old Kung, you shall run loose to-night, for surely we may trust you to do harm to no one this night, when peace and goodwill came to earth."

Kirstin, though she knew all this formula by heart, listened to it with none the less pleasure. But another enjoyment awaited her, for the children were now beginning to clamour for their long-looked-for treat, the Christmas-tree; the youngest girl, little Greta, to whom she had often told stories, threw her arms suddenly round her, exclaiming, "Kirstin must see it too, Kirstin is so good!" And the mother replied, good-humouredly, "Kirstin shall see it too," and she flung open an inner door, and the children rushed in, all screaming with delight, for there stood the little fir-tree, decked with lighted candles, trinkets, and sweetmeats, a gold star fastened to the extremity of the highest bough. Kirstin had never before seen a Christmas-tree, and though this one was on a small scale, her pleasure in the sight was very great, and little Greta clung to her, clapping her hands, and crying out, "How pretty! Oh, Kirstin dear! I'll give you some of my sweetmeats."

When she left the farm-house to go home, it was a clear frosty night; the stars were shining brilliantly overhead, and Kirstin's heart and mind were full of Christmas joy. Poor, and hardworked, with

only a future of weary labour, she enjoyed the festival. Truly "the meek" do even now "inherit the earth;" and the thought of how many thousands of happy Christian homes were now celebrating her Saviour's birthday was very pleasant to her. She almost fancied, as she looked up at the countless hosts of stars, that she could hear "the sons of God shouting for joy"—for was not the Incarnation a greater work than the creation? Truly her own heart sang in the inaudible choir of angels, "Glory to God in the highest." "Through toil and pain we win victory," she felt; "I toil, and father suffers pain, and through them he has learned to love me." And thinking of her father waiting for her, she hastened homewards.

"Father, God bless your yule!" she said, on entering the cottage. All was darkness: a groan of pain from the floor alone answered her. She uttered a cry of surprise, for hitherto either Hendrik or Bodil had always left a light in the kitchen. She went to the store, lit a candle, looked around: "Where are you, father? How came you to fall?"

Bodil Bryde had been with him that afternoon, but in her hurry to get back to her Christmas preparations had left Michael's pipe, which lay beside the lamp on the table, just beyond his reach. He, in leaning forward to get it, had fallen, bringing down table and all; a fresh attack of pain in his scarcely healed wound was the result. Kirstin could not raise him without help, so she ran in great alarm to Hendrik, who came immediately to her assistance. Michael was removed to his bed, but that night the fever returned, and next day inflammation was again apparent.

Kirstin could not leave him now, but sent word to her mistress at the farm that she hoped to return to her work soon. That hope was not to be fulfilled: some internal damage had been sustained, for Michael rapidly declined. He seldom spoke, but lay with his daughter's hand fast locked in his own. She said one day, "I must write to Hans, father." He replied, "Yes, he must come to fetch you;" she knew what was implied.

It takes a long time to get a letter from the Nissum-fiord to Copenhagen, and day followed day and no Hans appeared. Michael did not fret at the delay: his pride in his son, formerly his favourite child, had lately given way to his increasing affection for his daughter, and she, he knew, would be sure to find kindness from the neighbours in the event of his death.

Mr. Nordenfelt could not come to visit him, for he was ill and confined to the house. Kirstin read and repeated hymns to him sometimes; whether he heeded them or not she did not know. One day he said, "My coffin is ready." With the usual forethought of a Jutland fisherman, he had ordered and paid for it at the beginning of his illness. That night he said suddenly, "Kirstin, I shall tell your mother you are her true daughter—you have done your duty by me—if our Lord will let me," he added. "She was a real good woman—far better than I." Then after a pause, "Tell Morten I was sorry."

"Oh, father! he will be sorry," she began, but her voice failed her. "He loved you," she faltered out.

"God bless you, child!" he said again. "All my plans have failed; but I don't fear for you. Your mother was a good woman, and you are like her. Now go to bed: I will call you when I want you."

Kirstin accordingly lay down on the little bed beside her father's, for she knew he loved obedience better than any kind of service. Her father's voice never called her again.

*(To be continued.)*

## A NIGHT IN THE BUSH.



AN is never contented with his lot. When people say this, they always mean to say that they themselves are of an especially discontented disposition.

If you read my last paper, "Rather a Long Walk," you will remember that I had just reached a cotton plantation, and that I liked the employment there very much; but this liking did not last very long, and I soon began to get tired, and wish for a change of scene. The miseries of travelling were even forgotten; and I thought to myself, "though shepherding is rather lonely, I am sure it is much better than this." So one day I started up the "Bush" again, to look for a job "among the gum-trees."

It was now the shearing time, and as many shepherds had left their employment to go shearing, I had not much difficulty this time, and I was soon "made overseer to two thousand grass-cutters," as the Irish shepherd wrote home to his mother.



## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

### CHAPTER XIII.—*continued.*



THE twelve festal days of Christmas were hardly ended, and Kirstin sat alone in the grey, cold, winter morn, fatherless. She wept and called from out of the depths of her loneliness, "Oh, brother, brother, come back to me!" Now she could well understand little Karen's yearning for Morten. Hendrik and Bodil, and indeed all the neighbours, were ready to show her kindness, but she wanted something more.

The funeral was put off in hopes that the fisherman's son might yet arrive in time, but in vain. Kirstin's wages were spent, and she was obliged to accept assistance from Hendrik, who arranged everything for her. She saw her father consigned to his last resting-place; all the neighbouring fishermen were present, the Psalms were sung, the earth flung over the grave, and she returned to her dreary home.

Poor, lonely Kirstin! She thought, "I must work," and mechanically sat down to her spinning-wheel. "Whirr, whirr!" her head was bewildered by it, but it seemed a blessing to do something, for she could then neither think nor feel. Suddenly a quick footstep sounded on the floor, a well-known voice rang in her ear. "Kirstin, my poor little sister!"—"Oh, brother!" and the two were in each other's arms.

Hans had made preparations for starting as soon as he had received his sister's letter, but the delay in the departure of the steamboat had hindered him.

The brother and sister could not make enough of each other; they sat together till late in the evening, and Kirstin felt as though her tongue were unloosed, and her heart unlocked at the same time. Out came the joys and sorrows of the last two years, such as never could be told in letters. Not her father's illness and death only had she to talk about, but their grandfather's, and little Karen's. Then her engagement to Morten Ranildsen; her visit to her aunt at Skagen; her encounter with the housebreaker, and her cousin Otto's return. It was half a lifetime that she seemed to have lived through since she and Hans had parted, and he felt something of that too.

The curate of the place now came up, and asked another gentleman and myself to dine with him. After a glass of brandy the old man was quite recovered, except for a slight stiffness in his back. I went home with the curate hatless, torn as to my clothes, and with a bruise on my knee. Though it was an unusually rough descent, none of us were injured.

Thus ended the pleasantest hour and a half that I ever spent. The pleasure was doubtless enhanced by its being our first ascent. It had been an hour and a half above ground, in which time we had travelled thirty miles in a straight line, and had been a mile and a half from any good dinner made us ready for a walk of eight miles, and at half-past three, and we arrived in good spirits at C—— at half-past four.

It is often said by people who never were in a balloon that it is right to rush into danger and to tempt Providence. This is very true, but it does not apply to balloon travelling. Its safety is its safeguard. The chances of fire may be slight, but the consequences would be so terrible that extraordinary precautions are taken, and some aeronauts will not allow any one to have even a match in his pocket during an ascent. It would be extremely awkward to get out to sea, and consequently aeronauts take great care to observe their position and the direction of the wind. The danger of a railway train is exposed to are absent here. You cannot be derailed, nor is there much fear of a collision. Even the possibility of being dashed to pieces on landing in a storm is not greater than in a ship. Mr. Coxwell has travelled in balloons as many times as I have, and has been attacked by mobs on landing, but even he has had but a few mishaps. He has been becalmed for a week in the middle of London, where he could not descend on account of the wind. He has landed in a country without hedges or ditches, when he could not catch, and when the car was carried along the ground by the stone walls by a strong wind, and he was getting very tired. His leg was broken. This is the only injury he ever sustained. He was grappled once caught by a leggrapple, and the rope was cut. He landed successfully without a scratch. He has never been running into needless danger; he has never been in the least run into danger, but he has never been in the least run into danger cannot easily be forgotten.

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"Why, what a woman you are grown, Kirstin! and what a heroine too! I shall be quite proud of you." Then Hans began to talk in his turn, and he had also much to tell; it was less exciting than Kirstin's history, but no less interesting to himself, and scarcely less so to her. After her long sorrow the great joy of welcoming her brother brought back the colour to her cheeks, and cheerful tones to her voice. She felt almost ashamed of the gladdened state of her feelings when she remembered how on that same morning her father's grey head had been laid in the grave, scarcely understanding the blessed power of hoping and enjoying again after a season of sorrow wherewith Providence has mercifully gifted our weak natures.

At last it occurred to her to look her brother in the face, and she exclaimed, much as he had done, "What a man you have grown, Hans!"

"A gentleman, I hope," he returned, with a slight assumption in his tone.

"Well, certainly you don't look like one of the fishermen or farmers about here."

"I should think not, indeed. And you, Kirstin, have grown prettier, only you are so thin, and you used to be plump; and how tall you are! But to think of your having been obliged to go out as servant!" and Hans' face expressed great disgust.

"It will not do to dislike being a servant, Hans; what else can I do till Morten comes back? You are not old enough to take care of me, and I could not live in a house by myself, even if I could afford it."

No; and she could not even afford to live in her old home, that became clear next day, when she and her brother talked over business matters. Neither of them possessed any property. Hans had had to borrow money to pay his fare in the steamboat. Kirstin asked him why he had never answered her question about the Ramseys.

"How could I answer it? Don't you see, Kirstin, Mr. Ramsey's correspondent in Copenhagen paid my school expenses, and received the master's reports, which he sent on to Hamburg; he never came near me, and if Mr. Ramsey did not choose to write, it was not for me to be bothering him with letters." Hans spoke in a tone of extreme injury. "And did not I tell you last night that Herr Svane, the head master, hates me; and though he cannot accuse me of any faults, he spitefully puts down 'Pretty good' in my character book instead of 'Very good;' and then I suppose Mr. Ramsey is not satisfied: I can't

help it if he is not. Anyhow, Professor Jansen says I shall be an honour to the school."

"That I am sure you will be, Hans," said Kirstin, heartily. She now went on to unfold a project of her own; it was to accompany Hans to Copenhagen, and seek there for a situation in some family. Mr. Nordenfelt, she was sure, would advance her money for the journey, if the sale of their house and furniture did not cover all expenses; and surely some of her brother's friends or masters in Copenhagen would help her in finding such a place as would suit her. And then when Hans had a holiday she would ask for one too, and they could spend it together.

This plan had made Kirstin feel quite happy; a beaming smile illumined her face while she dilated on its advantages. Great was her surprise when her brother received the proposal with a decided negative. His sister a servant-girl in Copenhagen! no indeed. He was the companion of gentlemen's sons; he intended to be a gentleman himself. If Kirstin must indeed go to service, let it be anywhere than at Copenhagen.

Weakened by days of toil and nights of watching, wounded where she had looked for comfort, Kirstin hid her face and cried bitterly. Hans, vexed and irritated both with her and himself, took up his hat and walked out of the house.

However, when he came back, he found clear weather again. Kirstin having had her cry out, had reconsidered the matter fairly. She remembered that Hans was younger than herself: that she could not lean upon him as in her first feeling of loneliness she had fancied possible; their paths in life lay apart; he must take thought for himself, she for herself. She knew she could easily find a place in her own neighbourhood, but the idea was repugnant to her. She longed for a new scene, new life: it was hard, she thought, to live with strangers who did not care for her, but not so painful in a new country as in the old one. And must she indeed live with strangers? Suddenly the thought of Mrs. Ramsey flashed upon her. She would go to Hamburg; she would not trust to letters, which might easily be lost; she would go herself and seek out Mrs. Ramsey. The idea made her feel so happy, she was almost afraid of it; she went into her own room, and kneeling by her bedside, asked help and guidance from the Father of the fatherless.

So when Hans came back, he was surprised to find her looking cheerful again. "I have made up my mind what to do, Hans," she said; "I shall go to Hamburg and try to find Mrs. Ramsey."

Hans was startled at the suddenness of her resolve. "But Mrs. Ramsey may not want to have you."

"Then I am sure she will find a good place for me somewhere else."

"And suppose you cannot find her? she may be gone back to Scotland."

"Well, if I cannot find her, I can but come back again here; Mr. Nordenfelt will help me in some way."

"It seems to me a wild-geese chase."

"Don't you see, Hans," said his sister, a little out of patience, "that as I am not to live near you, I want to be near some one else who will care for me? I am quite sure Mrs. Ramsey loves me, however poor and ignorant I may be. But of course I intend to ask the pastor's advice first."

"Well, if you find her, no doubt it will be a good thing, and I shall be very glad for you to go," said Hans, who did not like his opinion to count for nothing. "Perhaps she will bring you up for a governess, and that will, of course, be much better than your living here. And certainly some one will have to look up Mr. Ramsey, for my three years' schooling will come to an end in six months' time, and I shall want to know what is to be done with me next. Besides, you could go with me as far as Copenhagen, and start the next day for Hamburg, and perhaps Mr. Nordenfelt could tell you where to lodge, only he is such an old fogey."

Kirstin smiled. "I shall go to see the pastor this afternoon," she said, "and you can go to your old master, Mr. Gründel, the while; it will be hard if between them we can't hear of a respectable lodging for me."

Kirstin's old friend was very glad to see her, for he wanted to hear all that she could tell him about her father. "You see, my child," he said, "I worried myself a good deal because I never could find the right word to speak to your father—the word that might unlock his heart, which was a sealed book to me; and then our Lord kindly took the work I was not fit for out of my hands, and shut me up here to feel my weakness, and teach me to be content to pray and leave all to Him. It was a great thing for a proud man like Michael to tell his

child he had been wrong; it showed he was made humble at last. Let us praise God for him: he did good work in his day, and the best when he subdued himself."

Then they talked over Kirstin's future. "There is only one objection to my going to Hamburg," said Kirstin, blushing, "but I thought I would write to you, and that you would kindly tell Morten when he comes home where I am gone."

This Mr. Nordenfelt readily promised, and a few days later Kirstin Ericksen took leave of all her neighbours, and with her brother crossed from Aarhus to Copenhagen.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### SERVICE WITH QUEEN ESTHER.

IN one of those old-fashioned dwellings, all wood and glass with little-hanging turrets and projections in all directions, so common in Hamburg before the repeated fires had taught the inhabitants to build in solid stone—in an odd-shaped sitting-room with balcony windows in summer, pleasantly shaded by the graceful foliage of a vine, lay on a sofa Mrs. Ramsey. A desk contrived for the use of an invalid almost incessantly in a recumbent posture was planted in front of her, and she was now writing a letter. On the floor by her side squatted Alec: a heap of playthings had been pushed impatiently aside, for the boy was now intent upon a story-book he held in his hand. At a little distance stood, knitting a stocking, a rather untidy-looking German girl, his attendant.

Both mother and child have altered during the two years and a half since they left Jutland. Mrs. Ramsey's face looks anxious and careworn, and there are traces of ill-health in her features, as in the thin tapering fingers moving so rapidly over the page of letter-paper. Alec has grown certainly, but he is still a weakling, and his left leg is supported by splints. The wound in his foot had healed over before he left Copenhagen, and the sprain seemed cured; but an accidental hurt had caused an abscess, and now the surgeon prescribed the greatest care and attention, lest the poor little sufferer should be lamed for life. Then, too, Mrs. Ramsey had been ill for some weeks, and although able to exchange her bed for a couch during the last few days, she had still very little power of locomotion. The extreme cold of a Hamburg

winter had tried both mother and child. In spite of the stove Mrs. Ramsey shivered as she wrote, and the sharp breezes of January penetrated through the windows even when closed.

"Master Alec will not go out to-day?" observed the maid, in German.

"How can you ask such a question, Gretchen?" replied her mistress. "Do you not see the snow is falling? the air is quite dusk; I can hardly see." She wrote on more rapidly than ever. In a few minutes she said, "Now, Gretchen, bring a light to seal this letter, and then put on your cloak and take it to the post."

When Gretchen was gone Alec threw his book down. "Oh, mamma, I can't see any more—and you have put out the candle. Can you tell me the end of this story?"

"No, my dear, I have never read it. But tell me what it was about, and where you left off, and I will make an end for you."

"No, I should not care for that, I want the real end. Mamma," said Alec, after a pause, "do you know I think Gretchen is a very stupid girl, she does not know any stories."

"She has never learned to read, Alec, and therefore has not read any books at all."

"Oh! that makes no difference, mamma, for Grace Armstrong told me that she and Mattie had such a nice maid who couldn't read, but could tell them all sorts of funny stories, only their governess, Miss Owen, did not like them to be much with her; and then Grace asked her father about it, and he said he wanted them to speak German fluently, and that talking to their maid would teach them best of all. I wish Grace and Mattie would have Gretchen, and let their girl come to us."

Mrs. Ramsey laughed. "A very complete arrangement, Alec, only more for your own benefit than that of your friends."

Gretchen came back, lighted the candles, and Alec was able to return to his book. He went to bed early, leaving his mother alone with her work. She was not particularly interested in its completion, and this being one of the days when the packet arrived from Copenhagen. Mr. Ramsey was not home till late, so the evening seemed long and dreary.

At last the door opened: she looked up, but only Gretchen's round, rosy face appeared. "If you please, madam, here is a young woman



just come by the packet who says she knows you, and wants to see you."

"Knows me! Ask her name, and what she wants; I think it must be your master she wishes to see."

Gretchen disappeared, but shortly returned after a second interview with the unknown young woman and her companion, the master of the packet, who had come with her to act as interpreter, for she could not speak German. "Her name is Christine," Gretchen was desired to tell her mistress, "and she comes from Copenhagen."

"Christine? from Copenhagen?" repeated Mrs. Ramsey; but the tones of her voice had reached the ears of the anxious listener outside, and pressing by the stout figure of the German girl, she sprang forward, "Dear lady! have you forgotten Kirstin?"

"No indeed, I have not forgotten Kirstin!" cried Mrs. Ramsey in her best Danish. "Is it you indeed! Come all this way to me! Come here, dear Kirstin," and, to the utter amazement of the German hand-maiden, the stranger knelt down by the sofa, and was cordially embraced by her mistress.

"You need not wait, Gretchen," said Mrs. Ramsey, rather impatiently.

"Please, madam," said the captain of the vessel, interposing his broad, red, weather-beaten face, "what is to be done with the young woman's box?"

"Send it here, of course," was the answer; "and pray shut the street door, Gretchen."

"Oh, I have not paid my fare!" And Kirstin got up to make final arrangements with her friend, the captain. When she returned Mrs. Ramsey was giving orders with respect to the traveller's refreshment and lodging for the night.

The two friends—for friends they were, though differing in age, in nation, in social position and education—looked each other in the face. "My lady has been ill," said Kirstin.

"And you have been ill, too, or in great sorrow, my child. How thin you are grown, Kirstin! You shall not talk to me till you have rested and warmed yourself, and had some food." And, indeed, great as was Mrs. Ramsey's desire to hear all that Kirstin could tell her, she found much difficulty in listening and talking to her. She had forgotten her Danish, and Kirstin her English: it was greatly to the

relief of both when Mr. Ramsey came home. He spoke a few words of kindly welcome, and sitting down between the girl and his wife acted as interpreter. Kirstin then gave an account of her father's accident, his death, her brother's visit to her, and her return with him to Copenhagen, etc., then she paused.

"Ask after the grandfather, and that young fisherman, Martin—something," said Mrs. Ramsey.

Kirstin replied that her grandfather was dead, and so was Karen Ranildsen; that Morten was gone to Norway. She blushed faintly at his name, so faintly that Mrs. Ramsey, being eager to ask after the pastor, did not notice it. Kirstin would have been glad to tell her friends of her engagement had they but questioned her a little more, but she felt too shy to begin upon that subject.

"And so the pastor approved your coming here to seek us out? it was quite right, Kirstin," said Mr. Ramsey.

"Mrs. Ramsey asked me once," said Kirstin, timidly, "to be her servant. I would gladly be so; and I thought if now she did not want me she would tell me where to go."

"As for your brother," continued Mr. Ramsey, "I have duly received the reports from his masters, and consider them satisfactory. But," he added, "a man who is writing the whole day has no fancy for extra work of that kind, such as letter-writing, and indeed what had I to say to Hans? I shall have to go to Copenhagen in a few months, and shall then see the lad and ascertain his wishes, as well as the opinion of his masters concerning his future course."

Kirstin was now pressed to go to bed early, and she was only too glad to comply. Mr. Ramsey, to save his wife fatigue, himself undertook to show her the way to her room.

When he returned to the parlour there was a smile on his face. "Another time, Queen Esther, when you offer your guests apartments in your palace, I would advise you to ascertain the species of accommodation they are likely to obtain. I do not suppose it was your intention that Kirstin should sleep in a hole tenanted by colonies of rats."

"Certainly not,—what do you mean, Angus?"

"I mean that Gretchen, being apparently unpropitious to the stranger, had prepared her bed in the dark lumber-room, or whatever it is, under the topmost gable of the house. Kirstin, unawed by the

scampering colony we disturbed on entrance, meekly declares it good enough; but I presume to think differently, and have made Gretchen remove her sleeping apparatus to the little room next yours; it is a mere closet, but at least habitable, and within reach of the rest of the world."

"Thank you, Angus; I wondered what kept you so long; I have been wanting you that I may get your consent to a scheme I have in my head."

"Quite unnecessary, I am sure; I know my place in the household—your majesty's majordomo, or grand vizier, if you please—it is much too late for me to take to enacting King Ahasuerus."

"Then have the goodness to listen to me. I want to keep Kirstin with me of course, and have no doubt she would gladly take Gretchen's place; but the dear girl looks so thin, I am sure she wants rest—besides, she is fit for something better, and I should like her to have leisure for learning English and needlework."

"Well, can't you keep Kirstin and Gretchen too?"

"But the expense, Angus?"

"I had rather maintain Kirstin than a doctor; I think, on the whole, she would prove a less expensive luxury. And she has done you good already; I have not seen you look so brisk since your illness, Esther."

"Oh, it is because I am so pleased to see her, and I know she could be such a first-rate nurse for Alec. They are both so quick; he would learn Danish from her, and she, English from him; and I could leave him with her whenever I required rest; she would amuse him so nicely with her songs and stories."

While this colloquy was going on, Kirstin, in the solitude of her little room, was thanking the good providence which had brought her safe under the shelter of true and trusty friends. What an eventful time had not the last three days been to her! The farewell to all the scenes of her childhood, the sight of the metropolis of her country, a night among perfect strangers, then the separation from her brother, and her remaining journey under the protection of a strange captain in quest of friends she might not find. But the friends were found; she was in their house, a cherished guest, and had been told that they were glad to have her; that they had work for her such as no one but herself could do. And Mrs. Ramsey's bright smile was the same as ever, and

Kirstin felt she would give her life to serve her ; yes, she was to live with, and serve those she loved, not strangers—well might Kirstin be thankful !

She took her breakfast with them next morning, for only Mr. Ramsey could explain fully to her her 'future duties in the household, and the breakfast-hour was his leisure time. Alec's big grey eyes were fixed gravely upon his new attendant during the meal ; he did not quite approve the arrangement which destined him to be henceforth entirely under her care, and though he had a traditionary affection for the Kirstin who had rescued him from drowning, it was rather a vague sentiment than a reality.

But the old friendly feeling between them was soon re-established ; that same day Kirstin commenced her service by drawing out her invalid charge in a wheeled chair along the side of the Alster lake, and in the evening Alec exhibited to her all his wealth in the way of toys. His possessions were indeed something marvellous, for his father's friends were kindly anxious to amuse the poor little sufferer, and playthings had been brought him from all parts. While displaying his treasures and naming each article to her, Kirstin received her first lesson in English, and by making him in his turn repeat their names in her own language, she gave him his first lesson in Danish. Thus Alec and his nurse soon learned to understand each other, perhaps all the sooner because at an early period of their acquaintance Alec, having inquired whether Kirstin knew any stories, was told that she could tell him many, only that he must learn her language before he could understand them.

However, things did not always go on smoothly between them. Alec was a well-disposed boy, but being an only child, and an invalid besides, had been a little over-petted, and made of too much importance ; his father was well aware of this, and warned Kirstin against over-indulgence, especially enjoining that unless the little that was required of him in the way of lessons was performed, no stories or songs were to be allowed him. The hardship was not great, for he could always read to himself, but somehow his supply of story-books was never equal to the demand, he continually craved something new, and he had taken a great fancy to the tones of Kirstin's voice ; even in narration it soothed and quieted his nerves, which illness had rendered sensitive and irritable. Then, too, he was subject to fits of peevishness

and indolence, during which nothing pleased him. Mr. Ramsey was very anxious that the child should learn to control himself, and he bade Kirstin never to let his moods of discontent and ill-temper pass unnoticed; he was to forfeit a pleasure of some sort whenever he had indulged in them.

One day there was a quarrel because Alec had not learned his English lessons perfectly for Mrs. Ramsey; she had been displeased with him, but Alec thought that the disgrace which had befallen him in the morning should be forgotten in the evening, and as soon as the dusk of twilight interrupted his afternoon's occupation of colouring some prints, he called upon Kirstin, as usual, to beguile the hour with one of her tales. She replied he could not expect his treat that day, and having fetched candles, placed one before him, that he might either read or continue his former employment, while she went on with her own work by the light of the other. The boy tried not to believe in her refusal, he repeated his demands again and again, and at last, angry at being still denied, tried to snatch the work from her hands. Leaning forward, he caught hold of the work and also of the table-cover, and in a minute everything upon the table, including the candles, was upon the floor. A cry of dismay broke from both Alec and Kirstin, and at this moment the door opened and a joyous voice called out, "Alec, how are you, my boy?"

"Uncle! Uncle Geordie!" exclaimed Alec, his ill-humour evaporating instantly.

"But where are you? all in the dark? and who is that scuffling on the floor?—your new pattern nurse, who keeps you in such fabulous order?"

"Oh, dear Uncle Geordie, do light a candle, please; there's the stove in that corner!" The new comer laughed, groped his way to the stove and set the door of it open; Kirstin meanwhile picking up the candlesticks. She had seldom in her life felt in such confusion; her hair and dress were disordered, her temper was worried—it would have been a relief to have seized Master Alec and shaken him. But she was spared that temptation, for he was now in the stranger's arms, being well hugged and scolded in the same breath. "I should like to know what you think you deserve, sir, making all this rout!"

The candles were relighted, and Kirstin could now see the slight figure of a young man bearing a strong resemblance to his sister,

Mrs. Ramsey; only with darker complexion, and a careless, merry look.

"Oh, Uncle Geordie!" cried Alec, again throwing his arms round his uncle, "I was a naughty boy and out of temper, I know, but it is not Kirstin's fault, she is such a capital girl; you'll like Kirstin so much."

Geordie Graham laughed again, but after another glance at the discomfited nurse-maid, he compassionately took his nephew in his arms, and carried him out of the room.

(To be continued.)

## THE GREAT MARQUIS.

### CHAPTER VII.

"Now by heaven we will not falter  
But united firm to stand,  
Lay our hearts upon the altar  
Offer'd to our native land."

*War Song from "Körner."*



T was a hot August afternoon that the royal army lay encamped at Kilsyth, the heavy folds of the royal standard clinging round the staff in the sultry summer air. Montrose was the sole stay of Charles now, for the English Royalists could no longer make head against their enemies, and the ill-fated king had during that same month been completely defeated at the battle of Naseby.

It was unfortunate for the Covenanting army that it should have two chiefs, Argyle and Baillie, for the leaders of the various divisions declined to obey the orders of either. Argyle, indeed, had no knowledge of military affairs, and Baillie, who was a clever officer, was not allowed to follow out his own plan of the battle. At the same time it must be observed that no one could understand Baillie's plan, consequently it is not wonderful, perhaps, that the army was unable to execute it. At least it is the only excuse that can be brought forward for a far superior and well-trained force being so completely defeated by a small, half-disciplined body of men. The Covenanters' account was that two of their regiments charged too soon, contrary to Baillie's orders, and were repulsed by the "rebels" (so they called the king's troops), who




**KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.**

## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

## CHAPTER XV.

## BEECHEN GROVES.

 HE arrival of Geordie Graham brought fresh life into the Ramseys' quiet household. There is always a good deal of friendly visiting going on at Hamburg, the people are a most hospitable race, and Mr. Ramsey had a large circle of acquaintances among Germans generally as well as among his brother merchants. But the long illness of his wife and child had caused him to give up all evening engagements, and his days were completely occupied with business. Sometimes, however, he now accompanied his brother-in-law in visits among his neighbours, and on these occasions Kirstin spent the evening with her mistress, which was a real treat to her. She was improving under Mrs. Ramsey's instructions in every respect, and the happiest effects resulted from her round of quiet occupations, good living, and freedom from anxiety. Serenity of mind was manifest in her clear eyes and open tranquil expression of countenance, while at the same time, through constant intercourse with the graceful "Queen Esther," she unconsciously became gentle in manner and speech.

The boy Alec benefited greatly by the presence of his uncle, who could always laugh or charm him out of his wayward moods; indeed it was hardly possible to look in that sunny face or listen to that clear merry voice and keep up ill-humour.

Spring came and the whole family removed to Düsternbrook, a pretty little bathing village near Kiel, situated on the shores of the Baltic: a host of pretty little villas, each standing in its own neatly-kept garden, front the crystal-clear, tideless sea, while behind rises a background of beech-woods.

The Ramseys took up their abode in an imitation Swiss cottage, more picturesque than convenient; the rooms, however, were apparently not made to live in, for at Düsternbrook people spend their days in the open air. Bathing begins at six o'clock, after that everybody takes breakfast in his garden; the noontide repose



follows, and then away to the forests so fresh and shady; the invalids drive and others walk. There how many a pleasant party was to be seen under the trees, sketching, working, reading, talking, seated on a soft carpet of moss variegated with spring flowers. The Ramseys were usually joined by the family of Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Ramsey's partner and most intimate friend. Mr. Armstrong had been a widower for several years; his two little girls and their governess were very glad to spend the afternoons with Alec and his mother.

"How charmingly these woods are kept!" observed Mrs. Ramsey; "it is such a good plan to clear away the underwood and yet leave the wild flowers growing."

Geordie Graham was the only gentleman of the party; he and his sister were both engaged in sketching groups of beech-trees; Miss Owenson was busy with her embroidery; Grace and Mattie Armstrong were gathering wild flowers; Alec had been making a pretence at sketching, which had soon broken down, and his only occupation now was watching the operations of a squirrel in a tree overhead; Kirstin at a little distance from the rest sat knitting.

"These are capital places for sketching in," said Geordie Graham; "I don't know any tree that offers more variety than the Beech; it is the Proteus of trees, and in these woods especially the beeches are of all possible forms and dimensions. Look, there is one trunk rising, a tall straight column with the foliage only crowning it, and the very next tree throws out its branches almost down to the earth."

"Surely the Oak is equally picturesque," said Miss Owenson.

"Oh yes, perhaps more picturesque, but then he is a somewhat cross-grained, stubborn character, a regular Englishman; force and energy personified, marred by egotism and self-will. But the beech is elegant, poetical, cheerful; it has a brighter colouring than the oak, and is the loveliest of trees in the spring."

"The Pine figures oftenest in Ossianic poetry, and is your national Scotch emblem," said Miss Owenson.

"The emblems of our fortunes perhaps, not of our temperament, for that it is far too gloomy. No, the Pine is a Norwegian; a fine fellow, true to the core, but rugged and uncultivated as the soil on which it grows. Now the Beech is a thorough gentleman, refined and social."

"But I don't think the Norwegian character is gloomy," said the

governess; "did you not say, Mrs. Ramsey, that your maid"—looking at Kirstin—"is of Norwegian descent? she seems cheerful enough."

"I am sure she is silent enough, and, no doubt, well able to stand alone and front the storm; a most estimable character: thank you, Miss Owenson, for helping me out in my theory."

"But Kirstin is much more Danish than Norwegian," protested Mrs. Ramsey; "it is very fine for you to call her silent, just because you talk so much nonsense she does not know how to answer you."

"Well," resumed Miss Owenson, "I, at least, am not afraid of you, and I want you to tell me what tree is to represent the Germans."

"Surely you have heard of the German oak," was the reply; "Germans and Englishmen are much the same—prosaic, useful, strong and solid."

"And the Italians?"

"The Lime, of course, overpowering one with its sweetness like Italian music, most lovely to look at, but certainly not practically valuable like oaks and pines. Look at the leaves, too, always torn to bits by all sorts of creatures, just like Italy. As for Spain, one hears of the Olive of Spain, but as I have no knowledge of the people I can't tell why it is adopted as the national emblem, beyond its being the common growth of the country."

The little girls here ran up with their flowers; Grace offered her bouquet to Mrs. Ramsey, Mattie, hers to Alec.

"Thanks, dear Grace. Now, Geordie, you have had your fancy out, let me have my turn. My hand is tired, I want to rest, and for all the world to attend to me and my flowers. I want to make a list of the popular names of the same spring flowers in different countries; I am sure it would be interesting. Now I will begin with our old home darling—the Daisy. Do you know what that name means, Grace?"

"Oh yes, Miss Owenson told me, it is 'day's eye,'—the sun. The cluster of golden flowerets in the centre is the sun, and the disk of white flowerets round it represents the sun's rays."

"If you expect me to find a meaning for our Scotch name of 'Gowan' I am afraid you will be disappointed," quoth Geordie.

"Give us a Welsh name with a meaning, Miss Owenson."

"One of our names for the daisy is 'Sensigl,'—tremulous star. You know on our breezy Welsh hills the daisy could never be perfectly still."

"Thank you, that is a very pretty name. And the French call this

pet flower 'Marguerite,' or pearl of flowers, and its Latin name is 'Bellis,' another tribute to its beauty. But the Germans, stupid people, don't appreciate it; they call it 'Gänseblümchen,' or 'goose-flower.' Kirstin," and Mrs. Ramsey raised her voice to attract the girl's attention, "what do you call this?" holding up a daisy.

Kirstin moved a little nearer to the others. "We call it 'Tusindfryd,' or 'thousand joys,'" she replied.

"Because it is so common and so cheerful: see, Geordie, how much more sense the Danes have than the Germans. And now, here is a flower that has a variety of pretty names in English—Heartsease, Herb-trinity, Love-in-idleness, Three-faces-under-a-hood, and half a score more—it must have been a great favourite in olden time. Do you remember the French name, Grace?"

"'Pensée,' and Miss Owenson says Pansy is a corruption of it."

"And in German one name answers to our Herb-trinity, 'Dreifaltigkeitsblume:' can you guess why it is so called?"

"From the three colours in it, perhaps."

"Yes; the Latin name 'Viola tricolor' shows that was the idea. What is its Danish name, Kirstin?"

"'Stedmodersblomst,'—Stepmother-flower," she replied.

"That is the same as the most common of its German names, 'Stiefmütterchen.' Now, Grace, I will show you why. We must turn the flower upside down. Here is the stepmother, the large petal in the centre, bright gold colour; on each side of her flaunt her daughters, also in bright colours; while underneath them you see the stepdaughters in dark, dowdy, purple dresses."

"I never heard that before," said Miss Owenson; "I am afraid we have not a popular name for the flower in Welsh."

"Now here is my darling Wood-sorrel," went on Mrs. Ramsey. "Some people declare that this, and not Clover, is really St. Patrick's Shamrock, the three-leaved herb which he used to illustrate the doctrine of the mysterious 'Three in One' to the simple Irish. It is called 'Alleluia,' I am told, in some parts of England because its pretty, drooping, delicately-veined blossoms come out about Easter-time, when Alleluia is sung again after the long disuse of the joyful strain during Lent. But another popular English name for it is 'Cuckoo's Bread-and-cheese,' and in French it is sometimes called 'Pain de Cucu.' What is it in Danish, Kirstin?"

“‘Siysmud,’—Cuckoo’s meat, madam.”

“Well, this is really curious,” cried Miss Owenson, eagerly. “Why in Welsh we call it ‘Bara-can-y-gog,’—White cuckoo’s bread. Is there no naturalist among us who can tell us whether the cuckoo eats it? if so, the fact must have been observed in former times by the peasants of different countries.”

“The cuckoo is apparently an epicure,” pronounced Geordie; “those bright green trefoil leaves would make a capital salad, I have often eaten them; give me some now, Grace.”

“There might be another reason for the name,” said Mrs. Ramsey; “it might have been noticed that the little plant blossomed at the season of the cuckoo’s return. I don’t remember the German name, do you, Alec?”

Alec, who having lost sight of the squirrel, was languidly pulling Mattie’s flowers to pieces, replied: “Gretchen called it ‘Sauerkee.’”

“Sour clover; that answers to our Wood-sorrel, or ‘Wood-sour,’ from the acid taste of the leaves. But now I remember the French call the cowslip ‘Fleur de Cucu;’ that must be from the time of its coming, for no one eats cowslip leaves, although the plant was supposed useful in medicine. But now for the Primrose, in German ‘Schlüsselblume,’—Key-flower: what do you call it, Miss Owenson?”

“‘Brillu Mair disawr,’—Mary’s scentless primrose,” was the reply. “Another of the many flowers dedicated of old to the Blessed Virgin.”

“And you, Kirstin?”

“We call it ‘Winter-lily’ sometimes, and sometimes ‘Pasque-lily.’”

“That reminds me of the English Lent-lily, otherwise known as Daffodil, or Daffodown-dilly.”

“A great favourite with the poets,” interrupted Geordie; “not to speak of their bidding

“‘Daffodillies to fill their cups with tears,’

and celebrating the bold flowers who ‘come before the swallow dares, and take the winds of March with beauty.’ Then there is the never-to-be-forgotten, though nameless bard, who tells us—

“‘Daffydown-dilly is now come to town

With a yellow petticoat, and a green gown.’

I suspect the gentleman’s name is ancient British, and is derived from Taffy, who we know was a Welshman.”

"You are quite wrong, Mr. Graham; the Daffodil has no connection whatever with St. David, I assure you; our name for it is 'Cenin Pedr,'—St. Peter's leeks."

"The Daffodil does not grow in these woods, so we shall not get the Danish name to-day. But now for a most charming little flower, delicate and graceful as a fairy—the Lily of the Valley. What do you call it, Kirstin?"

"I never saw it in Jutland, madam; it is very beautiful."

"And I don't think it favours us either," said the Welsh lady. "It is a fastidious little beauty. But these woods are full of Lilies of the Valley; and the German names, 'Maiglöcklein,'—May-bells, and 'Maiblümchen,'—May-flowers, are pretty. The French name Muguet is not worthy of them."

"Here is something you know at least, Kirstin—this Hawkweed?"

"Oh yes, that is Balder's Brow."

"Balder's Brow? I am delighted to make its acquaintance," said young Graham; "now we know what was the colour of Balder's hair; a shade more yellow than yours, Queen Esther; it is the only historical fact that has been elicited throughout this learned conversation. And the flower is altogether a miniature sun. I think Balder must have been the Sun-god after all."

"I suppose," continued Mrs. Ramsey, "the hawk has a fancy for this plant, for both German and French tell the same tale with their *Herbe à l'épervier* and *Habichtskraut*. What do you Welsh say about it, Miss Owenson?"

"We call it 'Blewynog,'—hairy," she replied; "the whole plant is covered with hairs."

"I move that this learned conference be adjourned," cried Geordie; "it may be all very well for you invalids who, I suppose, have no appetite, to live upon 'cuckoo's bread and cheese,' but my coarser taste craves a stronger diet. Let us get back to supper now."

"No; I want the Iris discussed first—the queenly Lily of France—*Fleur-de-Luce*, corrupted from *Fleur de Louis*, first adopted by my dear Saint Louis. In Italian it is *Fiordaliso*; in German, *Schwertlilie*—sword-lily, from the shape of the leaves. In Danish, Kirstin?"

"Our name means the same, dear lady."

"And yours, Miss Owenson?"

"We call it *Gladwyn*."

"Now, Geordie, only one flower more, the snowdrop; 'Perce-neige' in French; in Italian 'Primterella.' What in Welsh?"

"'Clockmaban,'—Baby-bells."

"Ah, that is pretty! and in German 'Schneeglöckchen,'—snow-bells. Now, you hungry mortal, I am ready," said Mrs. Ramsey. So little Mattie was despatched to call the carriage.

"Next time your Majesty intends to hold a botanical conference in the woods," quoth Geordie, "perhaps you will deign to let me know beforehand."

"What for?"

"That I may absent myself, and go sketching somewhere else. See what a failure!" and he held out his sketch, which after all was not badly done.

"Oh, Miss Owenson, I wish you could draw!" sighed little Grace, as she looked at the sketch.

"Do you want to learn, Grace? I'll teach you, if you like. We'll elope together next time, and leave the rest to pull weeds to pieces."

"And I'll go too," said Alec, "and Kirstin too; and then Kirstin can tell us a story while we draw."

Kirstin's face of horror at this suggestion amused the young man greatly. "I must hear one of these famous stories," he said; "don't you think now you might tell us one while we are waiting for the carriage, just as a relaxation, you know, after so much hard science?"

"Oh do, Kirstin, darling!" cried Alec; "I have not had anything to amuse me this morning; they have been talking about flowers all the time."

"Now, Kirstin, you shall do as you please," said Mrs. Ramsey. "I will not have you teased by troublesome children, big or little, into doing anything you don't like."

The little governess upon this went up to Kirstin and said, "Suppose you sing us one of your old Jutland songs instead, I should so like to hear one."

"I think I would rather sing than tell a story," said Kirstin, shyly, and looking gratefully at Miss Owenson.

And Geordie Graham having the discretion to move out of her sight, she sang with her usual spirit and sweetness of tones the ballad of "Swend Felding."

### "SWEND FELDING AND THE ELVES.

"Oh, pleasant shines the Ladye Moon, with silver beams so bright,  
The summer night has reached its noon, the Elves are dancing light:  
Lightly they dance upon the hill, to music low and sweet;  
The air is soft, the breeze is still—how nimbly move their feet!

The Elves are dancing in a ring,  
Lightly they dance, and sweetly sing.

"Swend Felding—then a lad was he—at Siellekov did dwell,  
The Lord of Framlev's manor free, the stripling serveth well.  
Swend Felding passed one night by chance, the orphan lad so bold,  
Sees from afar the Elfin dance upon the grassy wold.

The Elves, &c.

"Swend Felding near the hill doth ride, he never yet knew fear,  
And from his way he turns aside to see the dancing near.  
'The holy sign is on my brow, they cannot work me ill,  
And I will go and see them, how they dance upon the hill.'

The Elves, &c.

"Swend Felding to the hill draws nigh, when breaking from the dance  
A maiden fair, with yellow hair, looks up with tender glance,  
And holding forth a golden horn, cries, 'Taste our Elfin cheer,  
Nor pass us with distrust and scorn, thou lad that know'st not fear.'

The Elves, &c.

"But at her wiles the stripling smiles, he from her takes the horn—  
Now if thou drink, boy, better 'twere that thou hadst ne'er been born.  
The Elfin wine upon the ground he poured it all away,  
And on doth ride past the hillside, nor will one instant stay.

The Elves, &c.

"The horn of gold he still doth hold, he spurs his horse so fleet,  
The Elfin maiden in pursuit flies on with nimble feet.  
Swend Felding towards a stream rides fast, swims to the further side,  
All safe! no Elf hath ever past across the flowing tide.

The Elves, &c.

"Swend Felding looks across the stream, he laughs in joy and scorn;  
See how she stands with folded hands, and prays him for the horn:  
'Oh give me back the horn of gold, take any gift thou wilt!  
I'll give thee wealth, thou stripling bold; I'll give thee strength, or  
skill.'

The Elves, &c.

"Swend Felding spake full earnestly, 'This, wilt thou truly give—  
The strength of twelve men mine to be as long as I shall live?'  
'I give the strength of twelve,' she said. The costly horn of gold  
Flung o'er the water to the maid, beneath her feet it rolled.

The Elves, &c.

"Swend Felding hied him home that night, and called for meat, but lo!  
With strength of twelve, the appetite of twelve was his also.  
'Now bring me meat, and let me eat! 'tis worth your while I trow,  
For know, Sir Knight, twelve men of might are scarce my equals now.'

The Elves, &c.

"A peerless champion in the strife, in honour lived and died  
Swend Felding, praised throughout his life in Jutland far and wide:  
A copper cauldron deep his dish, his sword full three yards long,  
Is shown, they say, until this day, to prove how true my song.  
The Elves are dancing in a ring,  
Lightly they dance, and sweetly sing."

## CHAPTER XVI.

## ORDEAL BY FIRE.

KIRSTIN sat up late that night; little Mattie had torn her frock, and looked very grave at sight of the terrible rent, because she said their maid had left them and she should have to mend it herself, whereupon Kirstin had offered her services; but as the evening was fine, and the party remained out longer than usual, it was late before she could sit down to her work.

It was now past eleven as she continued her occupation, Mattie's frock required extensive repairs, and Kirstin, as she stitched away most carefully, indulged herself with sundry musings and thoughts of the past, present and future. "How kind every one is to me!" she said to herself; "how frightened I felt when I began that song!—it was a foolish one; I should have thought a clever lady like Miss Owenson would not have liked it, but she seemed pleased. How oddly things come into one's head! Alec asked me for a story about the elves, and Mr. Graham had been talking about having a great appetite, and so I could think of nothing but Swend Felding and his great appetite like that of twelve men." She started, for as though in answer to her thought, a musical voice below hummed the refrain to her song:

"The Elves are dancing in a ring,  
Lightly they dance, and sweetly sing."

It was young Graham just returning from a supper party; he had a quick ear, and though Kirstin's song had been to him in an unknown tongue, a few words, dance, sing, and elves, which in Danish resemble their English equivalents, had remained in his memory. He seemed afflicted with restlessness, and paced up and down the gravel walk under the window, which being open, allowed the night breezes to waft the scent of his cigar into Kirstin's room. "I wish I were not so shy," her meditations continued; "I never know how to answer



that young gentleman, though he is my own dear lady's brother. One thing is, I don't quite understand what he says; however, Mrs. Ramsey told me he was very fond of that English poet, Shakespeare, and that often when he said odd things he was only repeating bits from different plays. I must read them some day; I know Hans has read them, and Morten too had read them. Oh Morten, if I had but a letter from you, how happy I could be here! How good Morten is! when I compare him with others, I see that more and more. Cousin Otto was frank and pleasant, but Morten, if he had been ever so angry, would never have spoken to his mother as Otto did on that last day. And this Mr. Graham, he is very fond of his sister and his nephew; but if Morten were a gentleman and saw he had puzzled a poor girl he would not think it an amusement, he would be vexed with himself, I am sure. Let me see, how long have I to wait?—in another year Morten will come back from Norway, and then I shall hope to hear from him, or perhaps he will come here to see me. I must not be impatient. There is Mr. Graham going upstairs at last." For just at that moment, the young man, cigar and all, sprang up to his room. He passed Kirstin's door on his way to his own quarters, then suddenly remembering his sister's objection to smoking within doors, he flung his cigar out of window and went to bed.

Kirstin, having completed her task and extinguished her candle, was about also to retire to rest, when she noticed that smoke was blowing in through her open window: she looked out; it was not smoke only but fire! flames were rising from the balcony, and running round that corner of the cottage where Mr. Graham slept. She rushed along the passage, burst open the door of his room, crying "Fire, fire!" The young man was sound asleep; Kirstin shook him without ceremony, and repeated "Fire," pointing to the window. At the sight of the flames he sprang out of bed, and hastily threw on some clothes, while Kirstin ran on to arouse her mistress and Alec, who slept in a tiny room adjoining his mother's.

The young man was not many seconds behind her; he took Alec in his arms and carried him out into the garden, but not before he had aroused the rest of the household. The cottage was built entirely of wood; there could be no chance of escape except in immediate flight. But for Kirstin's being awake all would probably have perished. Mrs. Ramsey did not lose her presence of mind, but being less inti-

mately acquainted with the ins and outs of the house than Kirstin was, and feeling that the girl's physical strength rendered her a more efficient aid to others than she could be, she followed her brother down the only staircase that was safe, to the lawn beneath, where neighbours and friends had already assembled.

Meanwhile Kirstin went back to her mistress' room to secure some clothes for Alec, and Mrs. Ramsey's dressing-case. The flames were spreading fast, and just as she was about to set her foot on the little staircase, a heavy beam falling down rendered it impossible. "Go to my sister's room, to the window; I will fetch a ladder; make haste!" cried out Geordie Graham. "First take these," said Kirstin, throwing the clothes down to him, "Alec will catch cold." She then ran back to Mrs. Ramsey's room, seized some shawls, went out upon the balcony, and to the horror of the party in the garden, mounted on the parapet. "Alec, every one, get out of the way!" she exclaimed, and understanding her signals, though not her words, all moved aside quickly while the heavy dressing-case came down upon the lawn, bursting open with the fall, and scattering its contents upon the grass. Kirstin then vanished within the room, and for a few minutes a horrible fear took possession of every one. Mrs. Ramsey wrung her hands, crying out, "Oh, Geordie, make haste!" and the young man came back with his ladder quickly, but he stopped short at seeing the girl, who had knotted the shawls together and fastened the end of one of them to the balcony, swing herself down from the parapet. The shawls did not enable her to reach the ground, and cries burst from the bystanders when they saw Kirstin swinging in the air, but she dropped herself down safely, and although rather stunned, seemed unhurt. All crowded around her, and Mrs. Ramsey threw her arms round the girl in an ecstasy of delight, but she did not respond to the caresses lavished upon her. "She must have air," said Miss Owenson, and she led Kirstin aside; the girl was very pale and breathed hard, but she exerted herself to speak, and asked anxiously where Alec had been carried. "He will take cold," she said. Miss Owenson satisfied her as to his being well cared for, and made her sit still for some time, and she soon recovered herself.

Meantime the neighbours as well as the family were watching the destruction of the frail little dwelling; it was a scene of rare confusion, and not wholly without danger, burning pieces of wood falling in all

directions. The serving girls and villagers, who now mingled with the others, gave vent to all kinds of lamentations and surmises.

"How did it happen? who saw the flames first? who set light to the house?" and a hundred other questions were asked, and asked in vain, for nobody answered.

One question, however, seriously engaged the attention of Mrs. Ramsey and her brother: where were they to take refuge? The Belle Vue lodging-house was full, so was the bathing establishment. Some acquaintances of the Ramseys offered their apartments until other arrangements could be made, and as it was by this time day-dawn, breakfast was more acceptable to them than beds. This offer was therefore accepted, and the party proceeded at once to the hotel; but Kirstin walked slowly, and feeling faint lingered behind, leaning against a tree in the garden.

Very soon Mr. Graham came back looking for her. "Kirstin," he exclaimed, "you have hurt yourself I am sure, you look so ill."

"It is only my arm," she replied; "a piece of wood fell upon it; it is sprained, I think."


"It is bruised," he said; "let me examine it; don't you know I am a medical student?" and making Kirstin sit down, he fetched water and linen, washed off the blood, and bound up the arm in a professional manner. She thanked him heartily, marvelling to find herself at ease with him; but the young man was really kind-hearted, and in this emergency had naturally laid aside the bantering style which had puzzled and annoyed her hitherto. He sat down by her side when his surgical operations were ended and said, "Do you know what we have arranged to do? The proprietor of our poor little habitation is here, not wringing his hands as might be expected, but sitting taking his coffee like a sensible man. He says all the lodgings in Düsternbrook are occupied just now, so for a few days the ladies are to go into the country to his farm-house, and make the best of the degree of civilization they can find there. I think it a capital idea. And now you are better, come and have some refreshment, or my sister will be alarmed at your absence."

*(To be continued.)*

## KIRSTIN'S ADVENTURES.

CHAPTER XVI.—*continued.*

## ORDEAL BY FIRE.

 HE proposal of Herr Falk, the landlord, was duly carried into effect, and a few hours later Kirstin accompanied Mrs. Ramsey to a farmstead about five miles distant. Alec was delighted at the change, and the unwonted aspect of the place. The entire range of farm-buildings was covered by one roof, pitched very high so as to throw off the snow in winter. The buildings were partly of brick, partly of timber, and the effect was very good, the bricks being arranged in geometrical patterns, and the wood blackened and varnished. The carriage drove under a lofty archway, and they entered, through folding gates, into an oblong hall which ran through the midst of the buildings; the stables, cow-house, and coach-house ranged on one side; on the other, the dwelling-rooms of the human inhabitants. At the farthest end of the hall was the kitchen, with its large open fire-place, and brilliant array of pewter plates, and copper pots and kettles, as bright as bright could be. The parlours and bed-chambers were also bright and cheerful-looking, with their spotlessly white muslin curtains; and Mrs. Ramsey and Alec proved, as of old, their capability of making themselves at once comfortable and at home in a new dwelling. Kirstin, too, enjoyed the new scene: her arm gave her very little pain, but Mrs. Ramsey insisted on treating her as an invalid and keeping her quietly by her side, which was a great comfort to her, for she found it rather a difficult matter to make herself understood by the farm-servants. She sat down to supper with Alec and his mother, and it was not till Mr. Graham joined them that she felt a little out of her element, for he, with his incorrigible love of banter, seeing her seated close to his sister, addressed her with

“Soft you now.

The fair Christine! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remembered.”

It was like Greek to her, and she felt abashed and annoyed; but Mrs. Ramsey made her brother give an account of the way in which he

had spent the day, and Kirstin soon forgot her annoyance in the pleasure of listening.

"By-the-by," he said, "have you yet arrived at any reasonable solution of the mystery?"

"What mystery?" asked his sister.

"Why the grand conflagration of that poor little toy-house. What do you think the people at Düsternbrook have discovered? They opine that the girl from Copenhagen—I beg your pardon, Miss Ericksen!—set the house on fire, and then in her remorse flung herself down from the parapet in hopes of breaking her neck."

Kirstin laughed heartily, but Mrs. Ramsey exclaimed, "What a shame! I hope you silenced them, Geordie."

"Well, unfortunately I had no counter theory to propose, and all I could say in my fair patient's defence was that she certainly saved my life, and by implication that of everybody else. But I thought of course you would have found out who did the deed by this time."

"No one but Kirstin could know anything about the matter, and she and all of us saw the flames beginning from your corner of the house; so I am sadly afraid you are not free from suspicion. Are you sure you did not read in bed last night?"

"Read in bed, Queen Esther! why I had not even a candle to light me upstairs. I am as innocent as the babe unborn; I groped my way up in the dark."

"I heard you go upstairs, Mr. Graham," said Kirstin, shyly.

"There! is not that a first-rate evidence in my favour? Now as a reward, I have been getting some ointment, which I will rub into my patient's arm when the rest of the company have retired—not before, for they might find the smell unpleasant. It is used to cure sprains in horses, but is none the worse for that."

While the young surgeon was bathing her arm and rubbing in his ointment, Kirstin could not refrain from saying, "Do you remember what you did with your cigar last night, Mr. Graham?"

"Did with my cigar?—really I don't know."

"When you went upstairs you were smoking, for I noticed the scent as you passed my room."

"To be sure, and I flung it out of the window. Oh, I see what you are driving at."

"I thought if it fell on the balcony, where I recollect some loose

pieces of paper and straw were scattered, that would account for the fire."

"It did fall on the balcony, I remember now. So I am really the culprit!" And his face expressed such consternation that Kirstin felt really sorry for him; he had always taken everything so lightly that it had not occurred to her that it was possible for him to feel vexation. So she said, "Perhaps it was not your cigar, Mr. Graham; we cannot be sure."

"But do you think it was?" he asked.

"I do think so; but as I cannot be sure I will say no more about it." Kirstin thought how grieved she would feel, and how unwilling to face so good a friend as Mr. Ramsey, if she had caused such risk, confusion, and damage.

"It will give the people a lesson: they ought to build in stone," said Geordie Graham, and to Kirstin's surprise he began to whistle.

The next day proved wet and passed rather heavily, for the children had not their usual amusements or lessons, nor the bathing that occupied the mornings at Düsternbrook. In the evening Mr. Ramsey appeared, to the great surprise of every one; he had arrived some hours before at Düsternbrook, and found he had to travel farther ere he could see his wife. After the first greetings Kirstin, disregarding the rain, borrowed a cloak and went out for a walk. "If we stay here many days," thought she, "I must find some way of amusing Alec; he knows all my stories." Then she tried to recall some that she had not heard for years and years, and also sundry old songs that had once been favourites.

At the end of an hour she returned, and on entering the sitting-room Mr. Ramsey bade her sit down by him. "I have been wanting to tell you, Kirstin," he said, "that I have been to Copenhagen, and have seen your brother. My news you will find good on the whole; Hans is in perfect health, and in good repute. His tutors think highly of his abilities, and he has made many friends among them. Moreover, he has passed a difficult examination with great success."

"Oh, I am so glad!" exclaimed Kirstin.

"Yes, it is very satisfactory to us all. I undertook to defray his schooling expenses for three years; that time is now expired, but the Danish Government is willing to provide for the further education of lads who are likely to profit by their help. And Hans is to be one of

these. He says he wishes to be a law student, and he is considered well-fitted for the profession. It will be very advantageous to him to feel himself dependent upon his own exertions rather than on my patronage, for you know, Kirstin, your brother is not perfect."

She drooped her head, and said, "He is so young."

"True, we want him to grow older, to become more of a man, more self-reliant, and less vain, for vanity is a very childish fault. He will work desperately hard to prepare for an examination, but his interest flags when the stimulus is removed, and then he grows lazy. He is very clever, but lacks steadiness and perseverance. And after all, steady plodding does most work in this world; we cannot have examinations, and prizes, and all eyes upon us, every day of our lives. He is uncommonly anxious to be the gentleman," added Mr. Ramsey, smiling.

"I know he is ashamed of my being a servant," said Kirstin, colouring, her eyes cast down. "But," looking up with a bright smile, "I am not ashamed."

"I should think not; I told Hans how much we loved and prized you, and he seemed pleased. But I was thinking rather of a little foppery in dress; however, that is a trifling matter; he will probably outgrow it. School is a sharp ordeal; it brings out faults and virtues into stronger relief than home life, and we may well be thankful that your brother has passed through it comparatively free from blame. No serious fault, no breach of discipline is charged upon him; he is neither rebellious nor quarrelsome—only a little over-sensitive when reproved, and indolent when no reward is to be gained by diligence. There, that was what I had to tell you; I thought it best to speak of his deficiencies as well as of his success—was it not so, Kirstin?"

"Yes, thank you for telling me; truth is always best."

"And now," added Mr. Ramsey, "see, I have got some books for you; I bought them in Copenhagen. I think it right you should read some of your own authors as well as ours."

"Oh, how kind of you to remember me!" cried Kirstin, as she took the books from his hand.

"They come just at the right time, to amuse you now that you have been hurt in our service."

"Do you mean my arm? that is better to-day, and the hurt is not worth mentioning."

"Well, at any rate you must rest it awhile; so take your books and enjoy them while you have the time."

Kirstin did thoroughly enjoy both rest and her books; the rain had ceased, and she sat in the open air to read. She was delighted to find some stories among them, one especially that seemed an enlarged version of an old tale she had heard in her childhood.

Supper was laid out in a little arbour in the garden. The whole party were assembled, Alec on his father's knee; but when Mr. Graham joined them he greeted Mr. Ramsey with, "I heard you had come, Angus—but I have no time to stay, I am going away."

Mrs. Ramsey exclaimed at his want of civility and her husband rising and holding out his hand, said, "At least, Geordie, give me time to shake hands and express my sense of how much we owe to your presence of mind and exertions the night of the fire."

What was it made Kirstin suddenly raise her eyes to the young man's face? He too looked at her, not at his brother-in-law: those large hazel eyes of hers were eloquent enough; he read their meaning: they said plainly, "Now I shall despise you if you receive thanks and do not confess." He coloured furiously and stammered out in reply, "Pray leave my presence of mind alone, Angus!"

Mrs. Ramsey was about to call her brother to account for his discourteous speech, but he went on, rather defiantly:

"It was I set the house on fire, Angus, with my confounded cigar, which I threw out into the balcony when I went to bed, just remembering Esther did not like smoking in the house. I am sorry I have given her such a fright, and as to the damages, why, the only plan will be for you to stop my allowance and make me live on bread and cheese a while."

A general consternation followed this announcement. "Oh! Mr. Graham!" cried out the little girls, apparently horrified; Alec more phlegmatically saying, "So it was your doing, Uncle Geordie!" and Mrs. Ramsey exclaiming, "You must be out of your senses—did you not say yesterday you knew nothing about it?"

"No more I did, but Kirstin knew, and she made me recollect the cigar."

"But, Kirstin, you never said a word about it to me!"

"Was I wrong, madam? it was not my affair, it was Mr. Graham's."

"Kirstin is a capital girl, and I will never again call her 'the fair Christine,' or Miss Ericksen, since she dislikes it."



"Indeed, it was silly of me to be vexed, and I do not mind now," said Kirstin; but at the same moment little Mattie's voice was heard, "But, Mr. Graham, it was very naughty of you to set the house on fire."

"Mind your own business, Mattie; you were not hurt," cried Alec, indignantly; "only Kirstin was hurt, and she does not care," and he flung his arms round his uncle's neck. "I was not frightened, I liked to see the fire, it was very pretty, and I like being here, and, uncle dear, I am sure papa won't make you live on bread and water."

Mr. Graham laughed, put his nephew down, and still adhered to his purpose of going; but Mr. Ramsey would not suffer it, and a few minutes later all were at supper together. Mrs. Ramsey, however, had been very much vexed at the discovery of her brother's carelessness, and thus the two liveliest of the party being silent, the rest felt constrained and uncomfortable. Alec, finding his uncle made no effort to amuse him, changed his place; he discovered that he must sit by Kirstin, and help her, and then turning to his papa, he said, "Kirstin has sung us such a pretty song about a man called Swend Felding who ate as much as twelve men."

"I should like to hear it," said Mr. Ramsey.

And Kirstin, glad to do anything to restore the general hilarity, felt no repugnance to comply.

When she had finished her song, Alec said, "Did Swend Felding's being as strong as twelve men mean anything?"

"Yes, Alec," answered his mother, "I think so; I think a hero's being supernaturally strong, and possessing a marvellous sword, really meant that he had courage and spirit that never quailed. A man who could dare approach the Elves, and yet have self-control to resist their wiles, need never fear anything."

"Scandinavian antiquaries, I know," said Mr. Ramsey, "consider that the strife between the Gods and the Giants symbolizes the struggle of strong, unusually resolute men against the powers of nature. How terrible was often such a struggle in a wild, desolate country, where man found himself, as it were, face to face with the elements, and learned to regard them as malignant enemies bent upon thwarting him in every way, and destroying his work! For instance, a man builds a house most carefully—the very day he enters it to dwell, the sea bursts upon the land with fury, and his habitation is destroyed. Or lightning strikes upon the thatched roof, and it is burnt. It seems like personal

hatred in the elements—he fancies an evil spirit has directed the blow. Again, a boy, passing over a moor, such as one of your Jutland districts, Kirstin, empties his wallet on the hillside; the cry of an eagle may be distracts his attention for a moment; he looks back, his dinner is gone, a tricky gust of wind has carried it away—he believes the hill-men have been making sport of him.”

“I can see that many wild stories might arise in this way,” said Miss Owenson; “and that would account for the inveterate dislike to the fairy race that usually breathes in popular tales—to the peasantry they were unpleasant realities, personifications of natural forces. In later times, when no longer believed in, fairies might be regarded as amiable beings.”

“But, Esther,” said Mr. Ramsey, “what have you to say about the elfin-wine which caused madness or death, or kept the victim enthralled for ever after?”

“It always seemed to me to symbolize sensual pleasure,” she replied; “but Alec is tired of this discussion—will you sing us another song, Kirstin?”

“I think you will like ‘The Nightingale,’” she replied; “I believe I can sing that.”

### THE NIGHTINGALE.

A castle I know tow’ring high and bold  
Among the woods alone,  
Adorned with silver, and good red gold,  
And built of well-hewn stone.

In the castle-yard doth a lime-tree spring,  
And ’mid its leaves so green  
The sweetest of Nightingales wont to sing  
Her sorrowful notes, unseen.

There came a Knight, as he rode that way  
He heard the bird in her bower,  
He marvelled much at her plaintive lay,  
It was near the midnight hour.

“Now, little Nightingale, listen to me!  
That song once more to me sing,  
And with pearls I will deck that tiny neck,  
And cover with gold each wing.”

"Oh, I care naught for feathers of gold,  
I'll turn me away from thee,  
For I am a wild bird fearless and bold,  
No mate may be found for me."

"Art thou a wild bird, Nightingale bold?  
No mate in the world for thee?  
Yet may hunger compel thee, the snow and the cold,  
From the forest away to flee."

"Oh, I care not for hunger, nor yet for the snow  
That lies on the barren way;  
I care not for these, but a secret woe  
A weight on my heart doth lay.

"I once had a friend, he gave me his troth,  
'Twas a Knight of renown and power;  
But my stepmother heard, and hated us both—  
We were parted in that hour.

"To a Nightingale she witched me that day,  
I fly o'er the heath, unblest;  
And ever I trill my sorrowful lay,  
And build my lonely nest.

"And I sing and I mourn while others sleep,  
Sitting here on the lonely spray,  
And a quiet home for myself I keep  
Among the lime-leaves so gay."

"Now, little Nightingale, fleet of wing,  
I pray thee hearken to me,  
In winter with me in my bow'r do thou sing,  
In summer again fly free."

"Oh, thanks, fair Knight, but it may not be,  
Alone my fate must I bear;  
My stepmother, she so enjoined it on me,  
So long as I feathers wear."

On the tree sate the Nightingale, pensive and shy,  
The Knight had a sudden thought;  
Not so to be answered, not so put by,  
By her foot the bird he caught.

Thro' the garden bowers with its fragrant flowers  
He carried the bird that night,  
Tho' her form did change into shapes so strange  
As to fill his soul with affright.

She turned to a lion, she turned to a bear,  
A snake in his arms then lay,  
Then a terrible dragon she struggled there,  
But the Knight felt no dismay.

With his dagger he pricked her, the crimson blood  
Fell on the floor of the bower—  
The dragon was gone, and there she stood  
A maiden fair as a flower.

There is joy in the hall when the tale is heard,  
There is joy o'er forest and lea,  
For the Knight has caught the bonnie bird  
That sang in the fair lime-tree.

When Kirstin had finished Mr. Ramsey translated it into English for the benefit of his wife and Alec. "But," said Mrs. Ramsey, "what became of the first knight, who plighted his troth to the young lady before she was turned into a nightingale?"

"How funny it is that you should ask that question!" exclaimed Kirstin; "I have often wanted to know, because, you see, she seemed to like him; but there's no more about him."

"Of course, the first love was forgotten, and she married the second knight; no uncommon case," said Geordie.

"Really I think the first knight had no right to complain," said Mrs. Ramsey, smiling; "he left the poor girl to her fate, and number two had the trouble of disenchanting her; surely his courage merited a reward. Do you remember the Scotch ballad of 'Jamlane,' Geordie? there, it is the knight who has to be disenchanted, and he suffers transformation in the arms of his lady-love.

" 'They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,' &c.

I suppose the moral was that true love would hold fast by its object through every change, every trial, however strange and terrible."

"Very pretty sentiment indeed!" said Geordie Graham, who was gradually recovering his spirits. "It was certainly taking your partner 'for better, for worse,' with a vengeance, when he or she might turn into a lion or dragon upon your hands. Figuratively true, no doubt. I think your explanation very ingenious, Queen Esther, only I doubt the minstrel having intended anything else besides a marvellous tale."

"Did you ever read a description of the old castles of Denmark, Miss Owenson?" asked Mr. Ramsey.

"Never; I should like to hear something about them."

"In the first place, there was a bench at the outer gate; you will recollect that the ballads often describe the inmates of the castle as waiting for each other at the gate. The little hedged inclosure beyond, a sort of park, was called the 'rose grove.' Then, within the gates there was a fruit garden, called the apple house, and also an herb house, or garden for flowers and vegetables. Immediately surrounding the castle were the moats, crossed by a drawbridge, by which you entered. The castle portal was surmounted by tooth-shaped battlements; a warder guarded it. Beneath the watch-tower were the dungeons. Then there was the castle-yard, an open space with often a lime-tree in the centre, round which the young people were wont to dance. Well, still the castle itself, the chief building, or high-loft, as it was called, lay beyond. One of its wings was the women's room, or 'maidens' bower;' the other was the dining-hall, used by servants and retainers as well as by the lords of the castle, and these wings or side buildings were lower than the high-loft, and usually built of wood. Thus the ballads and old writings continually refer to the store-room or high-loft in the centre, as distinguished from the dwellings of timber on each side. There was a balcony to the central building for the enjoyment of fresh air, and also an ante-chamber with a floor of boards. It was in such an ante-chamber apparently that the nightingale stood on the floor, 'a maiden fair as a flower.' So now you have my lecture in return for Kirstin's song."

"And now, Angus, you must drink Kirstin's health, and Geordie's too," said Mrs. Ramsey, "since we all owe our lives to their united exertions. Kirstin has rescued Alec, once from water, and once from fire; only, the first time that young Morten Somebodyson was her assistant."

"She ought to marry one of us then," said Mr. Graham. Kirstin coloured crimson. The young man noticed it, and for a moment his vanity disposed him to appropriate the blush to himself; but he suddenly remembered something he had noticed that day in the beech-woods, and changed his mind. He was on the point of demanding that the health of Morten Somebodyson should be drunk, but checked himself, resolving to keep Kirstin's secret as she had kept his.

"Esther," he said, the day before he left Düsternbrook to return to Edinburgh, "do you know I am quite converted to your admiration of this pearl of nursery-maids? she puts me in mind of those verses in 'Harold the Dauntless' we were so fond of when we were children," and he went off singing:

"A Danish maid for me!"

## CHAPTER XVII.

ONE evening later in the autumn Kirstin sat alone under the verandah of another of the pretty cottages at Düsternbrook, to which place the family had returned. Her knitting was in her hands, but—an unusual thing with her—she had let it sink down upon her lap, and sat motionless, while she gazed upon the dim grey sea which lay calm before her beneath the gathering twilight. So absorbed was she, indeed, in her own musings that she scarcely heard a step approaching on the turf.

"Kirstin," said a voice close beside her, and Kirstin started and turned to see through the fading light a well-known form. It was the same on which her thoughts had been dwelling, and for an instant she half fancied that this was but the continuation of her dream. But there was reality enough in the deep earnest tones which repeated her name, and in the warm clasp of the hand which had possessed itself of hers.

Kirstin drew a deep breath. "It is you, Morten!"

"Yes, at last! and it is sooner than I had dared to hope, but our vessel had to run into harbour for repairs—I will tell you about that another time—and I thought I would go straight home; I can stay there now if—" He checked himself, then gently replacing Kirstin on the bench from which she had risen, he sat down beside her. Kirstin did not say much while, during the next few minutes, he spoke of his different voyages, and how they had prospered.

"And have you been happy here, Kirstin?" he asked at length.

"Oh yes," was the answer; "Mrs. Ramsey is so kind, and her husband and Alec, I could not have found truer friends anywhere."

"Then perhaps you do not care to come back to Jutland? you have found another home here." He turned an anxious questioning glance upon her as he spoke, but Kirstin gently shook her head.

"Not quite that, Morten," she said in a low tone; "I love Mrs. Ramsey dearly, and would go anywhere with her, but this cannot be quite like home to me." She paused for an instant, then went on:



"Just before you came I was looking at the sea, so grey and still, and almost longing for the sight and sound of our own waves that come rolling up near the Nisum-fiord. No, I can never love any place as I do Jutland—till I left it I did not know how much."

"Will you then come back there with me now?" he asked, bending towards her; "it is very lonely at home; will you come, Kirstin?"

She raised her eyes for an instant to his face, then laid her hand in his with quiet trustfulness: "If you will," she said.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Esther," said Mr. Ramsey, when a few hours later he entered his wife's room, "do you know I fear there is a chance of you and Alec losing your friend and nurse before very long?"

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Only that as I passed through the garden this evening I saw *two* figures sitting under the verandah, and one appeared uncommonly like our old acquaintance the young fisherman, Morten."

Mrs. Ramsey gave an exclamation of surprise not unmixed with vexation.

"Surely not! He will be wanting to take her away with him to Jutland."

"Most probably; but after all, Esther, we can spare her better now than we could have done even a few months ago. Alec is quite strong, and you know we were talking of returning to Scotland next month for the winter. Who can tell what plans may be formed before our stay there is over?"

"I was not thinking so much of how we could spare her as of the loss I should feel in any case. And she has been learning so much lately, and takes such pleasure in all our own pursuits. What a pity it seems that so much cultivation and refinement of mind should be thrown away in a Jutland fisherman's cottage!"

"Really, Esther," exclaimed her husband, "you are the last person I should have expected to hear assert that true cultivation and refinement of mind can be thrown away in any station in life."

"Well, I dare say I am unreasonable," she replied. "Of course I know that none of Kirstin's gifts can really be wasted, and that the next generation of dwellers by the Nissum-fiord will be all the better for the influence that her mind must have over theirs. As for Morten, he is as worthy of her as any one can be. But it vexes me so to lose her. I suppose," she added, with a sigh, "she will tell me about this visit before night."

When Kirstin came that evening to assist her mistress in dressing, it was with the full intention of telling what had passed between



Morten and herself; but she did not find it easy to begin upon the subject. Mrs. Ramsey watched her flushed cheek and downcast eyes, and the lips that parted more than once as if to speak; at length, turning towards her, she took both her hands in her own.

"Have you anything to say to me, Kirstin?" she asked.

Kirstin raised her eyes, clear and frank as ever, to her questioner, though the flush deepened as she answered,

"Morten Ranildsen is here; he has come home from his last voyage, and—"

"And he wishes to take you away with him," said Mrs. Ramsey, with a smile.

Kirstin knelt down and pressed her mistress's hand to her lips.

"Oh, dear lady," she said, earnestly, "do not think me ungrateful; I could never wish to leave you. But Morten and I were troth-plighted long ago; and it is very lonely for him now in his own home; his sister is dead, and he has no other kin."

"So I ought not to grudge his having you. But, Kirstin, you must not speak of gratitude; we owe quite as much to you as you to us."

"To *me*?" said Kirstin, in surprise. "You gave me a home when I was homeless. And I could never repay all your kindness."

"And do you think you have done nothing for us?" replied Mrs. Ramsey. "A year ago, Kirstin, I was weary both in body and mind, Alec was sickly and restless, and I had little strength to meet the difficulties of our daily life. You came and brought peace and strength into the household. I will not speak of what you have done for me, but look at Alec, he is scarcely like the same child. He must learn to do without his nurse now," she added, in a lighter tone.

"But we can wait," said Kirstin, eagerly; "Morten need not return to Jutland just yet. Indeed I could not go away till you could quite spare me."

"That would hardly be fair to Morten; besides," added Mrs. Ramsey, "my husband intends that we should pay a visit to Scotland and stay there during the winter, so it is best that we should part now. But I must see your wedding first, Kirstin, and Alec will be Morten's best man."

So it was settled; and one calm autumn day, in a quiet little church in Hamburg, Kirstin Ericksen became a wife.

Mr. Ramsey gave her away. Alec was divided in mind between

grief at losing his playfellow and the pleasurable excitement of a wedding; but happily he had taken a great fancy to Morten, and thus graciously condescended to approve Kirstin's acceptance of him. Moreover, he was already looking forward to a visit which was to be paid her in her Jutland home, as Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey talked of crossing over to Denmark in the following year, and of spending as much time as possible among their old haunts. This idea helped to soften the pain of parting to all concerned when at length the time of parting came, and Kirstin and Morten entered the Copenhagen steamer which was to convey them the first stage of their journey home.

Many heartfelt good wishes and prayers accompanied them; and as the vessel glided slowly through the harbour, Kirstin's eyes did not leave the shore while that one group of friends remained in sight. When the shore lay far behind, and only the open sea was around them, she looked up at Morten, who had been standing at her side, silently watching her.

"Kirstin," said he, "do you remember that evening, some years ago, when you brought Karen home and sang her to sleep with the ballad of Maid Thorailil?"

"And you were with us," she answered. "Yes, I remember—but I was almost a child then," she added, with a half smile and a blush.

"It may be so," he replied. "But do you know, Kirstin, that ever since that evening the idea of you, and that of Maid Thorailil, seem to have been woven together in my mind? Often when I was pacing the deck I half fancied that I saw Maid Thorailil standing near me in the moonlight; but she had your eyes, Kirstin, and it was your voice which chanted the old rhymes in my ears. I looked upon her as a sort of guardian angel—an angel of peace," he ended, in a lower tone.

Kirstin did not seem to hear his last words, her eyes were fixed upon the dim horizon, a look of grave hope and calm trustfulness upon her sweet face. The old home and the new life lay before her, and as she bent her head she murmured, half to herself, the last words of Maid Thorailil's prayer:

"God help us our wilderness journey along,  
And bring us to Paradise all!"

(*Concluded.*)